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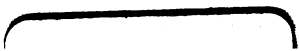
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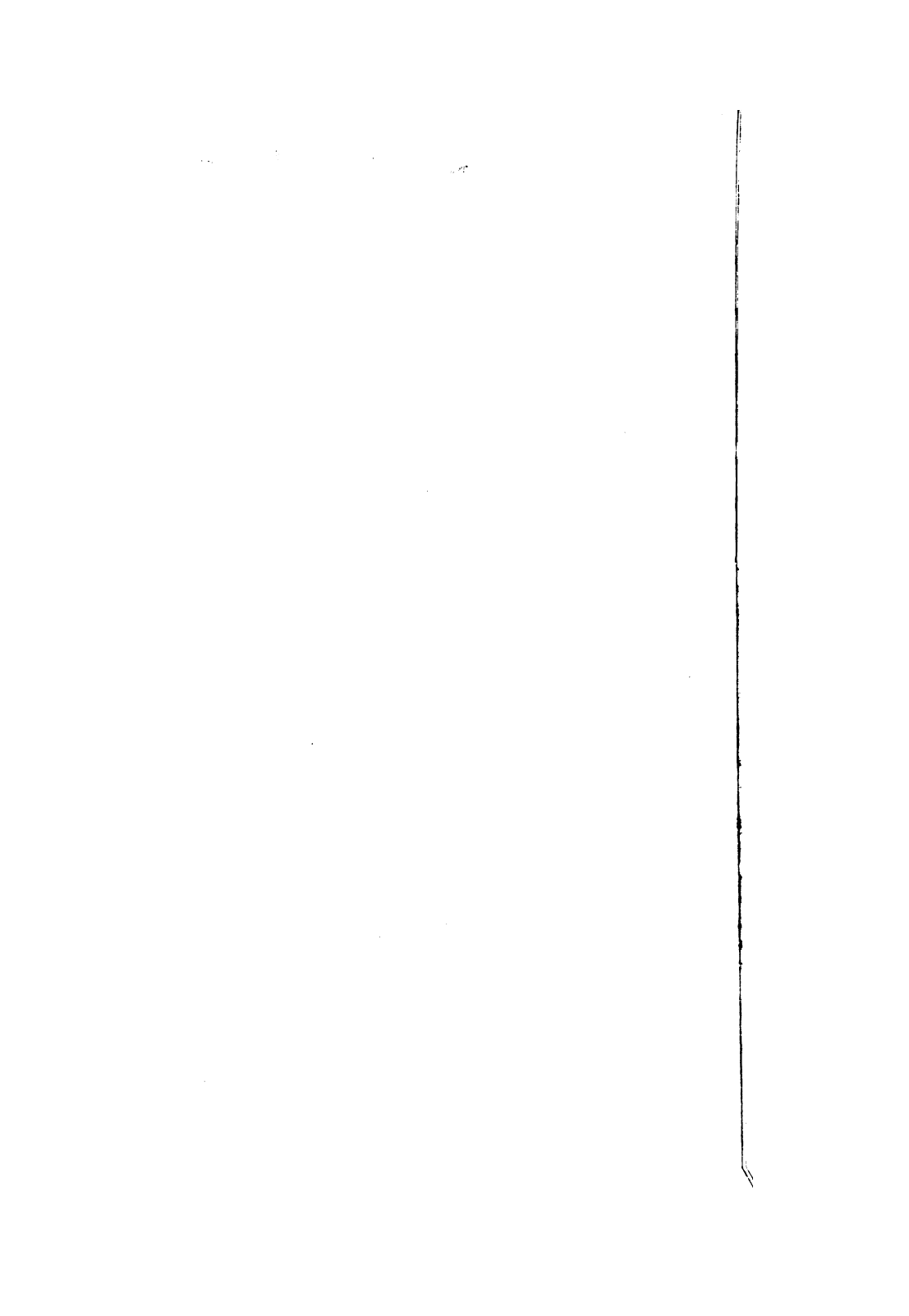


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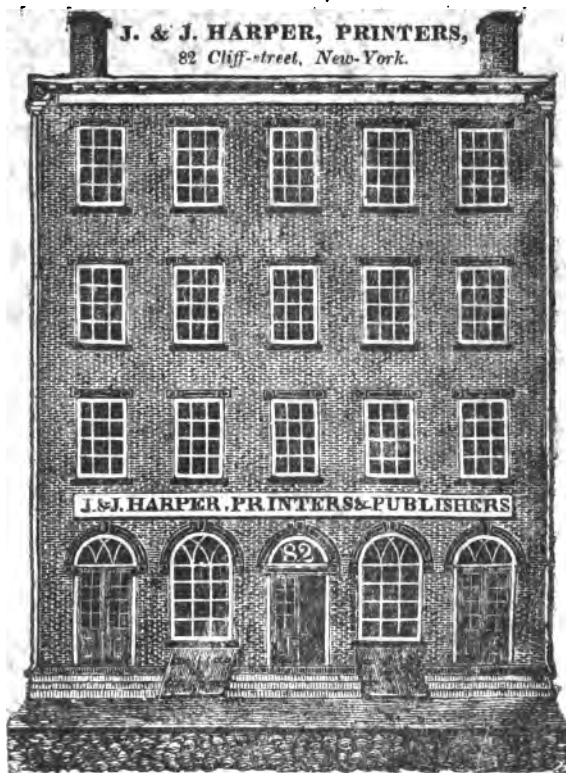


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INTRODUCTION.

TO THE GENTLE READER.

SHOULD you perchance have perused certain two small volumes, called **THE ADVENTURES OF HAJJI BABA OF ISPAHAN**, and had the patience to read the last page, you will there have seen a sort of declaration, that if the translator were to meet with encouragement, he would inform you how his hero (if such he may be called) accompanied a great ambassador from Persia to England, and of their subsequent adventures.

In all humility I beg to inform you that I am that translator; but in making the said declaration, I found that I had placed myself in a dilemma; for what is encouragement? let me ask. Is it the applause of friends? No; they are partial. The notice of the daily press? Puffing is no encouragement. The criticism of reviewers? They lose sight of the work, and write their own essays. Not even the several editions through which a book may pass can be appealed to as a decided test; for now-a-days, in England, reading societies are as numerous as reading men in other countries, and they alone exhaust a first edition, whether the book is read or not; whilst the second generally remains to lumber the booksellers' shelves; therefore, unless the copies sold be counted, not by hundreds, but by thousands, an author can scarcely be said to have acquired decided success.

Such being the case, to use Hajji's language, I folded the arms of idleness over the breast of resignation; and since my book had scarcely exhausted a second edition, I was determined to bid adieu to ambition, and to seat

myself among the obscure class of second or third-rate scribblers. In the mean while, certain duties having obliged me to cross the Atlantic to visit certain countries in America, I had almost forgotten the projected continuation of my translation; and, absorbed in the affairs of the New World, I became neglectful of my plans in the Old.

On my return to England, I was one morning roused by the reception of a letter from Persia. It came from one high in office, and with whom I had lived in habits of intimacy during my residence in that country, and its perusal threw me at once into the very heart of my Asiatic recollections. As I considered and reconsidered its contents, I could not forbear exclaiming, 'Encouragement! do I seek for encouragement to proceed with Hajji Baba? Here it is in abundance—this letter alone is sufficient!'

I will now venture to lay the said letter before you; and suppressing the first paragraph, which is evidently written by an English hand, I will then state why I look upon it as 'encouragement.'

It is as follows:—

'Tehran, 21st May, 1826.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,

'I am offended with you. and not without reason. What for you write Hajji Baba, sir? King very angry, sir. I swear him you never write lies; but he say, yes—write. All people very angry with you, sir. That very bad book, sir. All lies, sir. Who tell you all these lies, sir? What for you not speak to me? Very bad business, sir. Persian people very bad people, perhaps. but very good to you, sir. What for you abuse them so bad? I very angry. Sheikh Abdul Russool write oh! very long letter to the king 'bout that book, sir. He say you tell king's wife one*

* The governor of Bushire, in the Persian Gulf; by which it appears that the book reached Persia through India.

bad woman, and king kill her. I very angry, sir. But you are my friend, and I tell king, sheikh write all lie. You call me Mirza Firouz, I know very well, and say I talk great deal of nonsense. When I talk nonsense? Oh, you think yourself very clever man; but this Hajji Baba very foolish business. I think you sorry for it some time. I do not know, but I think very foolish.

'English gentlemen say, Hajji Baba very clever book, but I think not clever at all—very foolish book. You must not be angry with me, sir. I your old friend, sir. God know, I your very good friend to you, sir. But now you must write other book, and praise Persian peoples very much. I swear very much to the king you never write Hajji Baba.

'I hope you will forgive me, sir. I not understand flatter peoples, you know very well. I plain man, sir—speak always plain, sir; but I always very good friend to you. But why you write 'bout me? God know I your old friend..

'P. S. I got very good house now, and very good garden, sir; much better as you saw here, sir. English gentlemans tell me Mexico all silver and gold. You very rich man now, I hope. I like English flowers in my garden—great many; and king take all my china and glass. As you write so many things 'bout Mirza Firouz, I think you send me some seeds and roots not bad; and because I defend you to the king, and swear so much, little china and glass for me very good.'

And now very probably, you will ask, How can you gather encouragement from such a letter as this? for it sounds very much like the story of the horse-dealer, who, in showing off his horse, received a kick in his ribs, and although smarting under the pain, made up the best face he could, and exclaimed, 'Pretty playful creature, it is nothing but play!'

I proceed to assert, that I look upon it as an encouragement to have produced any sort of sensation among a lively people like the Persians, by which they may be led to reflect upon themselves as a nation. Touch but their vanity, and you attack their most vulnerable part. Let them see that they can be laughed at, you will make them angry. Reflection will succeed anger; and with reflection, who knows what changes may not be effected?

But having produced this effect, let me ask what further good may not be expected by placing them in strong contrast with the nations of Christianity, and more particularly with our own blessed country? And it is this which has been attempted in the following pages. In talent and natural capacity, the Persians are equal to any nation in the world. In good feeling and honesty, and in the higher qualities of man, they would be equally so, were their education and their government favourable to their growth. What is wanted, then, but some strong incentive to reflection? And if an insignificant work as the one in question can have produced the feelings with which the foregoing letter has been written, what might not the labours of some of the high and mighty in genius and ability produce, if applied to the same purpose? A change in the edifice may be made, that is certain; the only question is, on what side of it shall we begin to knock down?

Adopting his style of language, I answered my friend's letter;* and forthwith determined to proceed

* The following letter has been looked upon as of no consequence, excepting, perhaps, to illustrate the sort of answer which is likely to have weight with a Persian.

London, 10th Sept. 1826.

My dear Friend,—I have received your letter, and I pray that your shadow may never be less.

As for Hajji Baba, what for you not read that book before you write me such letter, sir? Sheikh Abdul Russool great fool; he eats dirt, and knows no better; but you, Muzhallah! you very

in unravelling the manuscript of which Hajji Baba had made me master. I found that to translate it word for word would be almost impossible, for it was so full of inaccuracies, so difficult of comprehension in its chronology, what took place in one was so identified with what had happened in another, that my only chance to be intelligible would be to found it upon a new model. The European names also were perfectly hieroglyphics. Who could discover Willoughby, in *Yellabelli*; Crawley, in *Cara Ogli*; Wellesley, in *Wialy*; Salisbury, in *Aaalbert*; Stracey, in *Istirgi*; Foreign Office, in *Fah in hafiz*?

I determined, therefore, to attempt the compilation of a work which should give as many of the first impressions which England made upon Persians as I could gather from the Hajjian manuscript. Leaving out long and tedious descriptions of things too well known to be amusing, and discarding numerous allu-

clever man, sir, now, vizier, how you not read before you write? You say Hajji Baba all lies. To be sure all lies. Thousand and One Nights all lies. All Persian story-books lies; but nobody angry about them. Then why for you angry with me? You say Persian people very good to me. Perhaps not kill me, not make me Mussulman; that very good; thank you, sir, for that; but that's all. You say you my very good friend, sir. Yes, sir, you my very good friend. You lie and swear for me to shah, that very good; but one thing little bad. You say because Meziroo rich, I very rich. That not very clever, sir. If I say, because shah very rich, you very rich; that stupid. I same as was; but you great vizier now, and got very good house, and very good garden. I send you, Inshallah! some seeds and roots by ship to India or Constantinople, and if you go on swearing so much to shah, perhaps send some china and glass.

'I hope you forgive me, sir; I not understand flatter peoples; you knew very well I plain man, sir—speak alway plain, sir; but I always good friend to you. But why you write such bad letter to me? God knows I your old friend.

'P. S. I got very good wife now, and very good child, sir. You grand vizier now, and got all silver and gold, and shawls and turquoise. I like silver and gold and nice things. As you write such bad letter, and so much abuse, and tell me I say lies, I think you send me some silver and gold, and because I got good wife and child now, little shawls and turquoise for me very good.'

sions to living persons, which, although in themselves, as far as I could discover, are yet inoffensive, yet still might cease to be so when they appeared in print; I have endeavoured to preserve the spirit of the original, although I have mainly deviated from its text.

And here for my own part, I beg leave to disclaim personality of any kind. The letter above cited of my Persian shows how easily an individual will take a character to himself, which, although it may fit in some parts, yet does not on the whole; and is no more presented as a finished portrait, than taking a nose from one person, a mouth from another, and the eyes from a third, to make up a whole face, can be called the likeness of either of those who have only contributed a feature.

And should you, my reader, perchance alight upon some trait which you may recollect, do not immediately exclaim, 'This is Mr. Such-a-one,' or, 'That must be my Lady This;' believe me, you will form imperfect conclusions. The one idea of illustrating Persian manners by contrast with those of England has been my *kebleh*, the direction of my Mecco. It is unnecessary to say that the work might have been extended through many volumes, so rich and various is the subject; but I felt that hints would be better than more elaborate descriptions; and as

The slightest sketch, if justly traced,
Is by ill-colouring the more defaced;

so I thought if I dwelt too much upon subjects which were obvious in themselves, my book would be thrown aside, and I should be preparing for myself that greatest of all calamities, viz. being voted a bore.

That you may not think me so, and that the protecting shadow of your countenance may not be withdrawn from me, is the earnest prayer of your humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

London, 19th April, 1828.

THE
ADVENTURES
OF
HAJJI BABA.

CHAPTER I.

Hajji Baba, now a man of consequence, enjoys his dignity.—He is ordered to collect presents, preparatory to an embassy to England from the Shah of Persia.

WHEN I entered Ispahan as the shah's deputy, so much wind had inflated my brain, and my nose was carried so high, that I looked upon my townsmen, the Ispahanis, in no better light than stones in the highway. Most luckily my mother and her husband, the aakhon, had quitted the city, and taken up their abode in a mountain village, the aakhon's birthplace, some fifteen parasangs distant, and therefore they did not obstruct my grandeur. As for old Ali Mohamed, the door-keeper of the caravanserai, whose presence would probably have interfered with my vanity, he had hastened to follow my poor father to the grave, and the inexorable Azrael* had long since sepa-

* Azrael is the angel of death, according to the Mahomedan faith, who, at the death of a true believer, separates the soul from the body.

rated his soul from his body. I almost instinctively avoided the approaches to our shaving shop, that scene of my early days and subsequent adventures, and indeed took but little pleasure out of the house, where, however, I took care to enjoy as many of the privileges attendant upon my new dignity as I possibly could. I ceded the seat of honour to no one but the governor of the city himself, and even with him I never failed to go through all the restiveness of a man of consequence, who, in forcing another to the seat of honour, shows that he does not thereby relinquish some pretensions to it himself. To any one who was ignorant of my origin, my knowledge of ceremony and forms of speech must have appeared quite natural, so perfectly at home did I find myself in my new character.

The business with which I was intrusted was one of no small importance, inasmuch as I was commanded, by virtue of a special firman, to levy upon the cities of Ispahan, Shiraz, and their dependencies, almost the whole of the presents intended to be sent to the king of England by the projected embassy. 'By my head, friend Hajji,' would I occasionally say to myself, 'thou art born under a fortunate star! Here are the beards of the inhabitants of two of the largest cities of Persia and their provinces placed in thy hand, that thou mayst pluck them at thy pleasure.' But then, recollecting some of the wholesome lessons which my past life of adventure and vicissitude had taught me, I determined to make the head of prudence guide the hand of moderation, and for once to show the Ispahanis that conscience is a thing

known in the heart of at least one of their fellow-citizens.

The firman was accompanied by a code of instructions, both of which, during the journey from Tehran, were the objects of my frequent meditation, more particularly because they contained one certain little word, upon which my mind constantly dwelt, and which raised my vanity to a most unruly height. I was styled *alijah*, the high in a station, or the exalted Hajji Baba. If any of my readers know what we Persians are, they will readily ascertain the reasons of my exultation; but those who do not must be told, that if there is one point of ambition among us greater than another, it is that of being called *alijah*. Here, then, my rank in life was settled. I bade adieu, as I hoped, for ever to the mortification of being called nothing but an *alishoon**, which was the case as long as I had been an executioner's officer, a mollah, and a merchant; and my imagination could scarcely contain the images of splendour and prosperity with which I was pleased to fill it. 'Let those poor devils, the *alishoons*, now,' said I, 'hide their faces under the armpit of humility! I, who am an *alijah*, may hold up my head, and look at the sun with impunity.' And I did not restrict my feelings within the bounds of mere words; for those who know me are, I am sure, aware that none ever supported his dignity

* Although *alijah* and *alishoon* are words nearly of the same import, viz. exalted, eminent, high in station, &c.; still custom has produced a strong distinction in favour of the former. It is a title bestowed on those of undoubted rank, while the latter is used in addressing persons in the middling classes of society.

better than I did. I did not hesitate to 'thou' and 'thee' those whom I had looked upon as my equals, and to draw out my *de-maugh-et-châk*, 'Is thy brain in a state of sanity?' with the superior tone of one who takes another under his protection. How delighted did I feel when I could say to a visiter, 'Sit,' instead of 'Be pleased to command,' the form of speech to which my lips had hitherto been accustomed! and it was perfect music to my ears to hear myself addressed by the inflating epithets of 'lord and master;' I, who through life had never been favoured with any caresses from the hand of fortune, without having very soon after received some corresponding buffet.

The instructions from the shah were to the following effect:—'That the high in station, Hajji Baba, was to use his best endeavours, with that wisdom for which he is famous, to procure several heads* of slaves of different denominations, worthy of being presented to the king of the Franks; † that they should be skilled in various arts; and that one at least of choice deformity, should be all ready prepared to act as a guardian in the infidel seraglio.

'That, in consideration of that holy injunction of the blessed Mahomed (upon whom be blessings and peace!) who ordaineth to give to those who have not, and to be merciful to those who are in need, the said Hajji Baba is ordered to procure divers horses, Arabian, Turcoman, and others,

* Horses, asses, mules, black cattle, sheep, and slaves are sold by the *ras*, or head, in Persia.

† The Persians have but recently learned to discriminate one king of Europe from another; and 'king of the Franks' even now is, perhaps, used as commonly by them to denote our sovereign as 'king of England.'

which, on being presented to the shah of the Franks, may draw forth the admiration of his infidel subjects, and at the same time do credit to the king of kings in a foreign land; and that, moreover, by way of a mark of special favour and friendship to the said Franks, a mare, if to be procured, may be added, and thus perpetuate the blessing of giving a race of horses to those who now only possess jades, and promoting those who hitherto have grovelled in the mud to be carried on high with their heads in the fifth heaven.

That, as it behooveth the dignity of the king of kings to clothe those whom he loveth in dresses of honour and high consideration, the said Hajji Baba is commanded to select and gain possession of certain stores of brocades, silks, and velvets from the royal manufactories of Ispahan, Yezd, and Kashan, as well as to procure the shawls of Cashmire, woven in the looms of industry by the hand of science, suited to the wants, tastes, and fancies of the followers of the blessed Isau, in order that the shah of England may make clothes thereof suited to his own taste and pleasure; and that the love of the shah to the whole Frank nation, female as well as male, may be manifest, the said Hajji is ordered to employ tailors, and men cunning in the fashioning of clothes, to make two full suits of dress for the queen of the Franks, similar to those worn by the Banou of the royal harem, duly adorned with precious stones, before and behind, above and below, and to add thereto a store of collyrium for the eyes, *khennah* for staining the hands and feet, jewels for the nose,

and jewels for the ear, pins for the shirt, a zone for the waist, and rings for fingers as well as toes.

‘That, the pearl being the ornament peculiar to royalty, the said Hajji Baba is enjoined to seek for and possess such pearls, or strings of pearl, as may form suitable presents to the king of the Franks; and if in the royal fishery at Bahrein any single pearl of consequence has been lately discovered, he is ordered to give due intimation of the same.

‘And he is further commanded to make collections of turquoises of the finest colour of the old mine, in order that, being worn and hung about the august person of the sovereign of England, he and his family may be effectually protected from glances of the evil eye, or from looks foreboding misfortune.’

To these were added several other articles for which Persia is famous, such as armour, swords, specimens of fine writing, inkstands, paintings, and talismans possessing various virtues. And, in fine, I was invested with almost full powers to attain for the use of the shah every thing that might be worthy of being presented to a crowned head.

CHAPTER II.

He describes the mode of levying the presents, and selects slaves for the use of the king of England.

WHEN I exhibited my instructions to the governor, he was struck dumb with astonishment, and, as the phrase goes, his head went round and round. He was the son of the lord high treasurer, and, in his own estimation, a personage of great consequence, and was therefore extremely surprised to find that one of my hitherto insignificance should have been intrusted with a business of so much importance, and placed as it were over him, and out of the reach of his control. But he knew that the grand vizier was no friend to his father, and therefore he felt, however humiliating my presence at Ispahan might be to him, still he was bound in policy to be civil to the servant of that great dignitary; for such I took particular care to call myself.

‘Where are we to find all these things, in the name of Allah?’ said the governor. ‘The king’s rayats are poor, and the articles here enumerated are only to be found among the wealthy. Our wits are diminished at the thought.’

I answered, ‘As far as my interference goes, I am less than dust; but here is the king’s firman, and you well know, O governor! that if these things do not exist on the face of the earth, it

alone would produce them, let them be buried one hundred gez deep. A despotic shah produces strange miracles.'

'Yes, that is very true,' said he, as he cast his eye over the instructions; 'but Ispahan is not Nubia, that slaves may be procured at a moment's notice; nor is it *Nejd**, nor *Guklan*, that horses are to be had when called for; nor are the pearl banks of Bahrein close at hand, no more than the mines of Khorassan for turquoises. Silks and velvets we possess, and such as we have, in the name of the Prophet, take; and tailors, by the blessing of Ali, to make them up, we have in abundance; and upon my head be it to fulfil that part of the orders of the Centre of the Universe; but as for the rest, our hands are cut short, and we must put our trust in Providence.'

I had seen enough of my countrymen, to know whence these difficulties arose; therefore I quietly whispered into the governor's ear, that I was not of those who kept the inside of my palm in darkness, but was willing to share with him such advantages as fate might throw in our way.

This said, I found that things took a new turn; difficulties disappeared; and what before was not to be found, all at once became plentiful. Slaves now thronged to the house; horses of all descriptions were brought; silks, velvets, shawls, and carpets were piled up in the corners of my apartments; and merchants from Hind, Bagdad, and

* *Nejd*, the province in Arabia whence come the most celebrated horses. *Guklan*, a tract of country among the Turcomans, famous for its horses.

Khorassan came in bodies to exhibit their merchandise.

Considering that I was a party concerned in the embassy, now in contemplation, and that much of its credit or discredit would accrue to me from the nature of the presents by which it would be accompanied, I became very anxious to make a selection of slaves, whose good qualities being both agreeable and useful to the shah of England, might cement the good understanding between our respective states. Many of both sexes were brought to me who had been taken from the harems and households of the principal men and merchants of Ispahan; but few met with my approbation, because few were accomplished in the arts which I conceived would be prized among the Franks. I at length fixed upon one, a woman of Ethiopia, who had acquired the peculiar habit of being almost without sleep; and when she did sleep, it was with her eyes open; so, if placed at night at the door of the shah of England's chamber, she would keep watch better than the fiercest lion. She was also warranted not to snore; a quality in a watching slave no doubt as much esteemed among the Franks as it is in Persia. I pitched upon a second who was celebrated for boiling rice well, and for her skill in composing provocatives; so that whoever eat of her handy-work might be said to live twice as long as any other person; and this I thought was the highest compliment that could be paid to a crowned head, who ought, in justice and consistency, to live twice as long as other mortals. To these a specimen of the bodily strength of our Eastern subjects, I

added a *pehlivan*, or prize-fighter, a negro whose teeth were filed into saws, of a temper as ferocious as his aspect, who could throw any man of his weight to the ground, carry a jackass, devour a sheep whole, eat fire, and make a fountain of his inside, so as to act as a spout.

These I was lucky enough to secure; but the attainment of that jewel in our eyes, an accomplished guardian over the honour of the weaker sex, was not of such easy acquisition. Few harems at Ispahan are of sufficient consequence to be superintended by such persons, for they are the appendages of princely state, and of those upon whom the riches of the world have been plentifully showered. My inquiries were extended to Shiraz, where the prince governor of that place, celebrated for the magnificence of his harem, maintained several; but who could dare to insist upon his relinquishing one merely for the convenience of infidels? I despaired of hearing of any thing which might suit my views, when my emissary in the city assured me that he had obtained intelligence of one whose hideous aspect was all that I could desire, and whose price was beyond rubies and diamonds. He was reported to be the most vindictive, spiteful, and inexorable of his species, as watchful as a lynx, and as wary as a jackal. But to gain possession of him would require some art, since he was the property of the head of the law of Ispahan, an old, decrepit, and jealous man, whose numerous wives, it was said, made him eat more abomination in the course of a day than did all the reverses common to mortals in the course of a year.

I very soon found that my applications to obtain him were useless, for I had to treat with a man of considerable influence ; and as I knew that it was the wish of the shah to keep well with the interpreters of the law, I did not press so immediate a compliance to the orders contained in my firman as I might have done. However, I thought it right to despatch a courier to the grand vizier with the intelligence requesting that a special command might be sent to give up this prize into my hands, and to have it strongly stated, that none but the person in question was fitted to fill the high post of guardian over the wives of the shah of England.

This instrument soon produced its effect. The head of the law, with despair in his heart, heightened by jealousy, at length submitted to part with his treasure, and *Mûrvari*, or the Pearl, for that was his name, was delivered over into my custody. For the information of the curious, I must take the liberty of describing a specimen of such rare and precious deformity. In the first place, he had a head of enormous size, placed upon a thin shrivelled neck, that seemed by much too slender a pedestal for its support. The face was composed of a succession of wrinkles, which festooned over his features in folds of loose skin. The eyes, large, watery, and bloodshot, possessed the heavy dulness peculiar to the snake. The nose was merely an indication of that feature ; but the mouth was that upon which the value of the deformity principally rested, for it was more a rent than an opening, the lower lip falling prone upon the chin, showing an inside of flesh seemingly on

the brink of mortification. In short, Mûrwari was perfection. His voice was more like a croak than any other sound ; and, altogether, when his features were set into motion, and when, at the same time, he exerted his lungs, it is positive that no woman, be she demon or angel, could ever for one moment dare to oppose him.

My assortment of slaves being complete, I soon collected the remainder of the presents, and then made my preparations for returning to Tehran. The governor and I had succeeded much beyond our most anxious expectations, for the surplus which we had managed to secure to ourselves was very handsome, all things considered ; and I found the grand vizier's words verified ; for, as the reader may recollect, he had forewarned me that this part of my commission could not fail of being beneficial to my interests. I determined to hoard this piece of good fortune as a provision against future want, and instead of laying it out in vanities, and in preparations for a journey to the infidels, to bury it many *gez* deep, well secured in sealed, bags, in some safe and secluded spot. None but myself should be acquainted with my secret ; and then, come what might, the day of necessity might overtake me, but it would find Hajji Baba provided against its severity.

CHAPTER III.

The notions of Persians and Englishmen upon slaves are found to be at variance.—Hajji Baba describes an interview with the English Elchi.

I REACHED the capital in safety with the presents ; my female slaves packed in baskets, my males on horse or mule-back ; my carpets, shawls, and silks made up into bales impervious to rain ; and my precious stones, &c. well secured in my own trunks. I made my way at once to the vizier's house, where I landed the caravan ; and having gained an immediate admittance to his presence, made myself welcome by a valuable present, which I freely assured him was all that our destinies had placed at my disposal, although certain mysterious sacks at the bottom of my *yakdan*, I knew, were laughing at his beard. I then gave him a long and faithful account of my proceedings.

He very scrupulously ascertained the amount of my offering before he paid attention to other matters ; and at length having cheered me by the smile of satisfaction, and the corresponding compliment of ' Hajji, your place has been empty,' he then proceeded to inform me that the eminent and exalted Mirza Firouz, the intended ambassador, had not been idle during my absence, for he had been fully taken up in furnishing out his own state and retinue, and that all now to be done,

previous to his departure, was to communicate with the English elchi upon the letters to be addressed to the king of the Franks and his court, and also to exhibit before him the different articles which had been selected for presents to his sovereign. No embassy, in modern times, had been sent from Persia to the infidels, and therefore we were anxious to produce as good an impression as possible upon their minds of the wealth, power, and ingenuity of our country.

The English elchi was invited by the grand vizier to visit him one morning, and Mirza Firouz was also ordered to be in attendance, when the whole of the presents should be displayed. No hint had yet been given of what they were to consist, and, excepting what he might have gathered from common report, he was supposed to be ignorant of that which he was about to see. He came, and was received in the *dewankhoneh*, or hall of audience; a ceremony seldom adopted by the grand vizier, who was an old man little given to show, but who thought it necessary on such an occasion to make a sort of official display. The curtain was drawn up and extended in front of the room, the fountain in the marble basin was made to spout forth its water, and bowls of fruit, cooled with ice, were spread upon the floor.

When the ambassador and his suite had taken their seats, and when they had been properly welcomed by the vizer, I, who stood at the farthest end of the apartment, was ordered first to present to the ambassador a list of the intended presents, and then to exhibit each article in rotation.

The slaves and Mûrwari, who were in attendance, were made to stand forward and range themselves in a row on the border of the basin. As soon as the eichi had looked at the list, he stopped at the first article, and exclaimed, 'How is this? Slaves!—This cannot be—We allow of no slaves in England.'

'What words are these?' said the vizier calmly; 'you have no slaves? Then how do you manage? who serves you?'

'We are all free in our country,' said the ambassador, 'and whoever comes there is free also.'

'But, surely,' said the vizier, 'your shah must have slaves. A king without slaves! Why, you might as well have a body without hands and feet. Who cooks for him? who attends him in the bath? who watches over him when he sleeps?'

'No,' answered he, 'our king has no more right to a slave than any one of his subjects. What you do by purchase we do by hire; and, what is more, we not only do not allow of slavery in our own possessions, but our king is using his best influence to put it down in other states also.'

'Indeed!' said the vizier, opening all his eyes and looking much astonished, 'you surely cannot be so cruel? What would become of the poor slaves if they were free? Nothing can be happier than the lot of ours; but if they were abandoned to their fate, they would starve and die. They are our children, and form a part of our family.'

'But you have it in your power to destroy them.'

'Destroy them!' exclaimed the vizier. 'Who

is fool enough to set fire to his own house ? Who would willingly lose the price of his slave ?

‘ At all events,’ answered the ambassador, ‘ you can beat them at your pleasure, and no one can call you to an account for so doing.’

‘ And what can hinder my beating any other servant, be he slave or not?’ said the vizier. ‘ All ranks here partake of the stick, excepting the shah, (whom Allah in his mercy preserve !) from me, who am the vizier, to the court scullion ; and were it not for that, who could exist among such a set of madmen as we Persians are ?’

‘ But,’ said I, in great humility, ‘ if the ambassador did but know the qualifications of these slaves, I am sure he would not resist their proceeding to England. Under the protection of the one, the shah of England might sleep as securely from treachery as if he were watched by a lion ; and eating of the food prepared by the other, he would never die.’

‘ Our manners are different to yours,’ answered the ambassador with great politeness. ‘ Our shah, Heaven bless his majesty ! sleeps, like his subjects, in peace,—he wants no one to watch him,—he eats his food without the fear of poison, and puts as much trust in his cook as in his grand vizier.’

‘ Then,’ said I, ‘ here is the famous *pehlivan*. He is a complete Asfandiyar,* a body of brass, and hands of iron ; you won’t surely refuse him ? Such a man is necessary to the state of every

* Asfandiyar, the son of Kishtasp, in Persian history. He was called ‘ Brazen-body’ on account of his great strength, and is esteemed one of the Persian heroes.

shah, and here is one who has no equal; with proper treatment he will fight anything that may be opposed to him.'

'Yes, by the grace of Allah!' exclaimed the first minister, 'Whatever is of Frank origin, he would soon annihilate it. He is an animal to keep in a stable.'

'We have our pehlivans too,' said the ambassador; 'but if they were to be deprived of their liberty, would lose their strength. No, we cannot admit of slaves, and therefore I cannot agree to receive even this one as a present to our shah.'

'Oh this is most wonderful!' did we all exclaim. Every Persian looked astonished; and Mirza Firouz seemed vexed at being deprived of the advantage of making presents, which, in our eyes, were expected to ensure the success of the embassy.

'Well, but you won't refuse this,' said the vizier, pointing to Mûrwari,—'this, who is without a price,—who has not his equal,—which even our king, the Asylum of the World, cannot boast of possessing.'

'Our king is in no want of such an officer,' said the ambassador; 'we do not even know what the office means, much less what is its use.'

'No?' said the vizier; 'but your king has his wives, in the name of the blessed Mahomed! and, therefore, he must have guardians to superintend them. No women can exist without guardians' (looking round him at the same time to gather the approbation of the bystanders), 'no more than an orchard can be safe without its walls.'

'What words are these?' was echoed by every

one present, this being a matter of such common acceptance as not to be doubted, until they were stopped by the English ambassador saying,

‘Our king has only one wife, and the whole of his government are guardians over her good conduct ; they are his Múrwaris.’

Upon this speech all the Persians laughed, and cried out, ‘*La illahah illallah!* there is but one God!’

‘How,’ said the vizier, ‘only one wife? Then what is the use of his being king? Suppose he gets tired of her, what then?’

‘How can I explain,’ said the elchi, ‘that which to you must be so difficult of comprehension? Women have frequently been our sovereigns. The meaning which we apply to the wife of your shah, and to an English queen, are totally different.’

‘It is plain,’ said the vizier, after weighing the subject in his mind, ‘that there is great difference between our customs and yours. Women here are counted as nothing. We put no trust in them. We look upon them as entirely devoted to the use of man ; and you might as well expect the tiger to do homage to the lamb, as to see a Persian submit to be ruled by a woman. No, no, the *kizzilbash* only submits to the brave—he who wields the sharpest sword. The sword! the sword!’ exclaimed the grand vizier, making a horizontal motion with his hand at the same time ; ‘’tis the sword which governs us ; there is nothing like a good *zualfaker*.*’

* *Zualfaker* was the famous sword of the Prophet Mahomet, which he alleged to have received from the angel Gabriel, and presented to his son-in-law, Ali.

‘But, in the name of the prophet, tell me,’ said Mirza Firouz to the ambassador, ‘your shah must have more women belonging to his household than this one wife? He must have his dancing and singing women,—the keeper of his clothes,—his story-tellers, to set him to sleep,—his watchers at the door,—his private cooks,—besides, the chief wife, the *Banou* of the harem—she must be waited upon; and if she has children, they must be served by women; and all these women together require the control and superintendence of such persons as *Mûrwari*. You cannot make us believe that the women of your country are so different from ours, that they are left without proper spies and guardians over them.’

‘However extraordinary it may appear to you,’ answered the ambassador, ‘such is really the case. Our women are under no control, and are just as free as our men. Our king, respected and loved as he is, could no more attempt to keep his wife and her attendants in the state of subjection and confinement in which they are kept in Persia, than he could, without a trial, cut off their heads. The laws would not allow it. And as for placing spies and jailers over them, that would be totally impossible. In the first place, where could he get them?’

‘Get them?’ exclaimed the vizier; ‘make them, to be sure, in the same manner that they are made here. A vizier who misbehaves,—a refractory khan,—a thieving *mastofi*, or secretary,—in short, any thing will make a *Mûrwari*; and a very good situation they get of it, let me tell you. Then all one’s prisoners of war are turned to such good account in this manner.’

The ambassador appeared horror-struck at this speech, and still persisted in refusing Mûrwari to proceed to England as a present to his sovereign. But he assured us at the same time, that when the anxiety of the king of kings for the safety of the honour of the British harems was known, he made no doubt that such good intentions would be received with suitable expressions of gratitude.

But having refused the slaves, he made up for any unpleasant feelings which he might have caused in our minds,* by the rapture which he expressed at the sight of the horses which were intended to be sent. He was, luckily for us, no great judge of them; and, therefore, the animal which a Persian would most likely have rejected, he accepted with joy. What they wanted in excellence we, however, made up in fine sounding titles. One covered with marks, foreboding ill luck, was called *Khodabaksh*, or the Godsend.— Another, white with age, was the Pearl. A third, who would never permit its ears to be touched, was known by the sportive name of *Sermest*, or Drunkard. Besides which there was a Hawk, a Hero, and a Bosom-friend, all names descriptive of the qualities of the animal. It had been in contemplation to add an elephant to the horses, seeing that its daily consumption of food was very inconvenient to the shah's treasury; but the ambassador having remarked that it would be difficult to transport it on shipboard, that part of the plan was omitted.

* The refusal of a present in Persia is always esteemed an affront, and between crowned heads is a signal of warlike intentions.

To the other presents the ambassador gave his ready approbation. In the same manner as we had named the horses, so we dealt with certain swords and pieces of armour. One sword was called Timoor's whip, and another was said to be the very scimitar with which Nadir Shah made his entrance into Delhi. A handsome corslet, helmet, and cuishes of steel inlaid with gold, were presented as having belonged to the famous Shah Ismael; whilst a shirt, inscribed all over with choice sentences of the Koran, and which had been worn by the shah's uncle, the great Aga Mohamed, during all his wars, was sent as a special mark of the friendship of the shah to the person of his brother of England, with a pressing request that he would wear it next to his skin whenever he went to battle, for that it was a sure talisman against any danger in or out of the field.

To the shawls, the magnificent quilts, the Herat carpets, the silks, the velvets, the brocades, the ambassador made no objection; and he also accepted, without hesitation, of the pearls, the turquoises, the rubies, and the emeralds. The contemplation of the dress intended for the queen seemed to afford him some amusement. When it was spread out, the jacket opened to display the embroidery, the shirt with its ingrafted precious stones, and the trowsers so well padded and overlaid with cloth of gold as to stand by themselves in the middle of the room, he laughed outright, and although he assured us that his queen would find it inconvenient to put on these articles, since the Frank women dressed differently to ours, still

with great good will he agreed to number this among the presents.

The conference being thus terminated, the ambassador returned to his house, leaving us to express our astonishment at the strange things we had heard concerning the extraordinary countries which we were about to visit.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the manner of conducting a royal correspondence in Persia.—A genuine letter from the king of Persia's chief wife to the queen of England.

THE next most important matter to settle was the letters to be addressed to the king of England and his ministers, in answer to those brought by his ambassador. This was a subject of much consideration, for it was a long time since we had addressed any one of the kings of Frangistan ;— and it would be difficult, in so doing, to ascertain how far the Asylum of the Universe might compromise his dignity. The ambassador from the shah of England, 'tis true, had brought several oddly shapen, oddly written, and strangely sealed letters, whose form and appearance were as different from those used in Persia, as was the ambassador's smooth chin to the grand vizier's bearded one. What the Franks explained to us, as in-

tended for the seal, but which we thought at first might have been some precious salve, or ointment, was that which created the greatest curiosity amongst us. It was contained in a gilded box, and upon it was impressed a figure of strange import, representing a man on horseback killing a beast. Our learned men were called upon to offer some explanation. The nearest which they could afford was a conjecture that it might represent Rustam killing the celebrated white devil; but this was laid aside, for what had the Franks to do with our great hero, and where was the white devil ever heard of except in Mazanderan? The explanation which the Franks themselves gave was this, that it represented one Georgio, one of their favourite imâms, who was always at work to keep a furious dragon from desolating England, and attacking their king; and, therefore, that the representation of this great and everlasting miracle was used as a talisman to all writings, and to every thing relating to royalty, by which means the country was preserved in safety. This seal being attached by certain silken strings to the bottom of the letter, was the cause of much discussion between the grand vizier and the elchi. The former asserted that it denoted and acquiesced in inferiority; the latter maintained that no such intent could be implied, for that the king of England esteemed himself inferior to no crowned head in existence. We asserted our right to place the shah's seal at the very top of the letter; but this the elchi rejected with much indignation, because he had found out that this form was only used in

Persia towards an inferior. We then offered to stamp it on one side of the writing ; this also he objected to, because that might look like too much familiarity. He then suggested that the seal might be placed on a separate piece of paper, and inserted loose in the letter ; to which we willingly agreed, because whilst he asserted that it was placed where it ought to be, we might on our part assert, if we chose, that it was intended for the very top of the letter.

The letter at length was composed, and was looked upon as a model of fine writing. The *Moonshi al Momalek*, the great moonshi of state himself, had applied the whole of his genius to selecting such flowers of language as would not fail to diffuse joy when exhibited in those dark and dank regions of the north ; and it was remarked that the refined allusions which it contained were so difficult of comprehension, except by minds the most acute, that no common mortal could ever pretend thoroughly to understand what was meant. I cannot charge my memory with the contents of the whole letter, but there was one passage in it which was admired by all the court as a most finished piece of eloquence, and repeated from mouth to mouth as the acme of composition ; it was this :—

‘ When the flower-garden from which the sweet-smelling flowers of this letter have been culled shall be refreshed and watered by the oscillations of your majesty’s eyes, beaming good fortune, and when their fragrance shall have risen in soft incense into the inmost chambers of your understanding, at that auspicious moment may you be

seated on the throne of health, and reposing under the canopy of a well organized brain.'

Now, what common mind could ever suppose that this was only intended to mean, 'we hope that this letter will find your majesty in good health?'

There still existed one difficulty, and that was, to answer a letter which had been written by the queen of England to her, whom, in the ignorance of our customs, the English called the queen of Iran, and which was accompanied by a present, consisting of a portrait of the queen, set round with diamonds, suspended by a chain, to be worn round the neck. Now, although the shah's principal wife is called the Banou Harem, or the head of the seraglio, yet her situation in the state bears as little affinity to that of queen of England (from what we could ascertain) as, one may say, the she buffalo kept in the enclosure for food and milk, has to the cow fed and worshipped by the Hindoo as his god. Our shah may kill and create banous at pleasure, whereas the queen of England maintains her post till the hand of fate lays her in the grave. However, it was necessary to answer the letter; and, after it had been tried by several of the office scribes, it was at length undertaken by the great moonshi, who had succeeded so well in the former instance. As such a correspondence was new in the annals of the empire, I will herewith give a copy of this letter, in order that the world may know that genius and wisdom are flowers peculiar to the soil of my country:—

*Letter from the king of Persia's chief wife to the queen of England.**

‘With prayers resembling the chaste garment of the Virgin Mary acquitted of false accusations, and with salutations true as the testimony of Isau given in favour of his mother’s virtue, we hail your majesty, our beloved sister, whose court is resplendent as paradise ; the pearl of the shell of authority ; the lovely Venus in the sky of greatness ; the ornament of Great Britain ; the accomplished of the age ; whose head, we pray, may be encircled with the canopy of splendour so long as the celestial bodies, like the illuminating chandeliers in Christian churches, give light to the utmost recesses of the sky ; and so long as the sign Gemini, resembling the crucifix, is apparent in the heavens. We beg leave to assure your majesty of our sincere affection, and to acquaint you that at an auspicious period like the breath of the angel Gabriel communicating grace, and at a time like the invigorating respiration of the blessed Isau, the letter of our beloved sister, scented with musk and ambergris, reached the royal seraglio, perfuming our assembly with the breath of our beloved sister, and feasting our delighted senses with the intoxicating odour of the lily. Its variegated contents, while they gratified us with the assurance of your majesty’s friendship, were an earnest of the accomplishments of the mind of our illustrious sister. By the blessing of Allah, the alliance between the two states is so firm, that the distillations of the pen in the garden of con-

* The sanction of the highest authority has been graciously given to the publication of this original letter.

cord, the variegated flowers of harmony and unanimity thereof, are exulting and smiling. From the exchange of ambassadors the doors of friendship are thrown open on all sides. It is necessary that the sweet-singing nightingales of the pen of correspondence should warble some notes in the garden of affection, and open the buds of our design in performing the pleasing duty of acknowledging, with thanks, the receipt of the acceptable present of our beloved sister, which we have hung upon the neck of accomplishment. May your house, the dwelling of kindness and friendship, ever flourish. The duties of friendship point out the necessity of occasionally sprinkling drops from the cloud of the pen, to increase the verdure of the meadow of affection. May your majesty's honour and glory be perpetual.'

CHAPTER V.

The shah's ambassador to England and Hajji Baba have their audience of leave of the Asylum of the Universe.

THESE letters, with others from the ministers of Persia to those of England, in which the business and interests of the two states were discussed, having been duly written and communicated to the English ambassador, nothing was now left to be done previous to our departure, but that Mirza Firouz should receive his audience of leave from the king of kings.

The astrologers were consulted upon the most fortunate hour for the beginning of an enterprise of such great importance both for the individuals engaged in it and for the state whose interests were concerned, and they fixed upon the anniversary of the death of Omar ; a day sacred to joy among the sectaries of Ali. On the day previous to that of departure we were ordered to take leave of the shah, and the English ambassador was also invited to be present on the occasion. In order to receive every advantage from the awards of fate, the king determined to seat himself, for the first time, in a saloon which had been newly erected, an act always looked upon as productive of good fortune, and thither we repaired. His majesty was seated in a corner, reposing on his pearl-ingrafted cushion of state, and on his carpet ornamented with precious stones. The grand vizier, the lord high treasurer, and the secretary of state were standing before him, when Mirza Firouz, followed by myself, entered the courtyard ; and after having stood on the border of the marble basin for some time without our shoes, Mirza Firouz, as a mark of peculiar condescension, was ordered into the room, and took his stand near the vizier, while I remained fixed where I was.

The Mirza thought it necessary, and indeed it was proper etiquette on such an occasion, to clothe his face with looks of great dejection, considering how soon he was to be deprived of the all-inspiring, and all-exhilarating presence of the great king ; and when he stood before his majesty with downcast eyes, with his hands before him, and

with an humble half-inclined curvature of the body, one might suppose that he was a criminal brought up for condemnation, rather than one who was about to be clothed with the great dignity of being representative of one of the greatest sovereigns of the world.

‘Why are you thus downcast?’ exclaimed the shah; ‘after all, do not you enjoy the king’s condescension?’

‘*Belki, belli*, yes, yes,’ exclaimed the three ministers all in a breath, while Mirza Firouz’s looks were on the brink of tears. ‘Yes,’ said the vizier, ‘the condescension of the king of kings once secured, can any thing else be required?’

‘Tis true,’ said his majesty, addressing himself to Mirza Firouz, ‘you are about embarking in a ship, you are going on the sea, and will live among the infidels, but recollect that by so doing you ensure to yourself the shah’s approbation, and then, *Inshallah!* please God, when you return, your face will be whitened to all eternity. What can you wish for more?’

‘*Inshallah! Inshallah!*’ was echoed by the three viziers, while Mirza Firouz knelt down and kissed the ground.

‘Besides,’ said the shah, raising his voice to a tone of gayety, and smiling with great benignity at the same time, ‘besides, reflect what wonders you are about to behold. Instead of losing the faculties of your brain, consider yourself one of the most fortunate of men. You are going to see the most celebrated beauties of Frangistan. You will see the faces of the wives of my brother the king of England, doubtless the gems of the beau-

ties of his dominions. You will see more wonders than a Persian ever yet saw.'

Upon this, Mirza Firouz broke the silence of his tongue, and exclaimed, 'May the condescension of the king of kings never be less. May he live a thousand years. I am less than dust, and am ready to cover my head with ashes. Let me but live to return with a white face, and I am willing to undergo whatever miseries the infidels may choose to inflict. Whose dog am I, that should refuse to obey the orders of the king of kings? I have only one supplication to make before I go, and which I beg permission to place at your majesty's feet.'

Here he paused, waiting for the royal answer, when, after a minute's interval, the shah exclaimed, 'Say on.'

'My supplication consists in this, that, encountering the dangers so celebrated and well known, of the great seas, the tempests, the rocks, and the monsters of the deep, dangers which no Persian can think of without shuddering, should this least and most insignificant of your majesty's slaves happen to be swallowed up, he hopes that his house* may still enjoy the protection of the king of kings; and, moreover, that his son, now an infant, his only child, may ever sit under the shade of the throne. I have said my word, and my supplications are at an end.'

Yes, by the head of the shah, answered the king in great good humour, 'yes, make your mind

* When a Persian talks of his *khaneh*, or house, it is understood that he means his women.

easy ; lay your head on the pillow of confidence, for whatever may happen after all I am a king ; your son shall be our son ; and from this day we appoint him one of our slaves in office ; and when he shall attain the proper age, shall wait upon our person, and watch over our safety. Go, go ; collect your fears into a heap, and bid them rest.'

Upon this, Mirza Firouz again knelt, and touched his forehead to the ground ; while the viziers exclaimed, '*Mashallah, Mashallah !*'

The English ambassador was then introduced, and with him a young infidel, one of his suite, who was appointed to attend the Persian embassy to England to act as interpreter, and when the occasion required, as mehmander. They were permitted to be covered by the same roof that sheltered the Asylum of the World, and were invited to take post in the room.

When the accustomed bows and prostrations had been made, and the shah had delivered his *khosh amedeed*, 'You are welcome,' he said ; 'by the blessing of Allah, elchi, this will be a fortunate day for the interests of our two states. The shah has spread his carpet in a new place, and he hopes that the despatch of his embassy to England will be attended with the good fortune which such an act secures.'

To this speech the elchi bowed, and said he fervently prayed that the friendship which now existed between England and Persia would last for ever.

The shah then expressed a hope that the person whom he had selected as his representative would

be agreeable to the English nation, and requested that the elchi would make it known to his government that he was a man enjoying the royal confidence; and in order to that he added, 'You will be pleased to notify officially to my brother, the king of England, that he has been honoured with the highest distinction which a Persian subject can enjoy. The shah this day endows him with one of his own robes.'

Upon this, a signal being made, a seryant brought, wrapped in a napkin, a *catebi*, or furred cloak, which had frequently graced the royal person, and it was immediately transferred to the shoulders of Mirza Firouz, who once more knelt and kissed the ground, whilst the viziers and the elchi complimented him by saying, '*Mobarek*, may you be fortunate.'

The shah then addressed the king of England's representative, and asked him, with great politeness, whether he was satisfied with the presents which had been selected for his court? to which he received a flattering answer, and said that only one thing was wanting to make them complete, namely, a portrait of the king of kings, in order that the people of England might form some conception of the beauty of his person, and of his dignity as a sovereign.

To which the shah was pleased to make a suitable reply, saying, that he had not been unmindful of that part of the ambassador's wishes, for that his painter-in-chief had been ordered to prepare a portrait, not only of himself, but of the princes his sons also, which he trusted that his brother of England would accept as a mark of

his peculiar friendship. The painter-in-chief was then ordered to exhibit the portrait, which was indeed a great and immortal effort of art. It represented the shah in the chase, in the very act of piercing an antelope with a spear on the fullest speed of his horse, with the crown on his head, his magnificent armlets buckled to his arm, and dressed in all the state jewels. The painter, with inimitable ingenuity, had contrived to introduce forty of his sons, like so many stars in the firmament blazing in different constellated groups; but for want of room he could not introduce the rest.

After it had been sufficiently exhibited and admired, it was rolled up, and prepared for the journey.

The assembly was now about being dismissed, when the shah stopped the English ambassador, and sending for the court poet said, 'We have still one other mark of our friendship for the king of England to show you. Through your hands, O elchi! the shah received a box, on the lid of which your aged sovereign (for we have perceived that his hair is white*), has caused his own person to be painted. We have faithfully kept this gift, and cherish it as it deserves. As a return, we have caused this trinket to be made.' At the same time he drew from under his pillow a pocket looking-glass, curiously painted and enamelled, upon the lid of which was a miniature portrait of himself. 'When my brother shall look upon himself in this mirror,' said the king of kings, 'he will

* In this portrait of George III. the hair was powdered.

also see our portrait ; thus two sovereign heads will be reflected ; and in order to illustrate this we have caused our poet to write the ode which is inscribed on the surface of the frame.*

Upon which Asker Khan, the *melek-al-shoheroth*, or the prince of poets, who had now appeared, was ordered to read aloud what was written on the opposite lid of the glass ; and clearing his voice, and stroking down his beard, sang as follows :

'Go, envied glass, to where thy destiny calls thee ;
Go, thou leavest the presence of one* Cæsar to receive that of another.

Still thou bearest within thee thy sovereign's form ;
And when thou 'rt opened again by Britain's king,
Thou 'lt reflect not one Cæsar, but two Cæsars ;
Not one brother, but two brothers ;
Not one Jemsheed, but two Jemsheeds ;
Not one Darab, but two Darabs :

And as the two Cæsars thus become one,
So will the English and Persian nations unite.
The friends of the one will be friends of the other ;
And the enemies of either shall be enemies to both.

Go, envied glass, to where thy destiny calls thee ;
'Go, leave the presence of thy sovereign to receive that of his brother.'

All the assembly seemed struck by the beauty of the poetry, and the ingenuity which gave rise to it. The English elchi assured the shah that it would be received with the greatest satisfaction by his own sovereign, who would not fail to look into the mirror at least once every day ; while the viziers and Mirza Firouz did not cease to extol the wisdom of their royal master for having contrived so infallible a mode of uniting the two

* To this day one of the titles by which the sultan of the Turks is known in Persia is, *Kaiser Rôm*, the Cæsar of Rome.

nations in friendship, and of bringing their respective sovereigns so near to each other.

During all this time I had stood on the brink of the basin, and the shah had not deigned to notice me. But when he dismissed Mirza Firouz from his presence, and when I was pointed out to him as one who was to accompany his ambassador to England, he exclaimed, in a loud voice, while I kissed the ground, 'Go, do good service; labour hard to make the shah's face white in a foreign land. Open your understanding and learn things useful. The shah expects you to understand all the languages of the Franks at your return, in order that you may be able to translate all their books, and let us know under what star the infidels of those unknown regions draw the breath of life. Go, and having done this, the condescending looks of the king of kings await thee.'

I had scarcely strength to stammer out, '*Be cheshm*, upon my eyes be it,' so overpowered was I by the shah's kindness and affability; and as soon as Mirza Firouz had reached me, and we had gathered up our slippers again, we retreated whence we came, and went our way to make preparations for immediate departure.

But however exalted I might have felt by the magic of the shah's words, still I clung in preference to realities; and, therefore, at the close of day slipped out into the skirts of the town, and in the burying ground, near to the tomb of the unfortunate Zenab, I buried one heavy sack full of tomans. At least, said I to myself, there shall be one spot in the world towards which my thoughts may turn with interest and affection,!

CHAPTER VI.

The Persian embassy leaves Tehran.—The ambassador makes a soliloquy; and Hajji Baba shows how well he can make himself agreeable.

THE embassy to England was composed of the following persons:—

Mirza Firouz,	. . .	ambassador.
Mirza Hajji Baba,	. . .	secretary.
Mohamed Beg,	. . .	the master of the ceremonies.
Ismael Beg,	. . .	<i>nazir</i> , or steward.
Aga Beg,	. . .	master of the horse.
Hashem,	. . .	<i>peish khedmet</i> , or footman.
Abbas Beg,	. . .	} <i>jelowdars</i> , or head grooms.
Hossein Beg,	. . .	
Taki,	. . . . .	<i>ferash</i> , or carpet spreader.
Sadek,	. . . . .	running footman.
Feridoon,	. . . . .	barber.
Hassan,	. . . . .	cook.
Mahboob,	. . . . .	black slave, the treasurer.
Seid,	. . . . .	ditto, valet de chambre.

Besides many *mehters*, or stable boys.

The young infidel before alluded to, who had accompanied the English ambassador to Persia, and who knew but just enough of our language to misunderstand all that we said, was to proceed in the train of Mirza Firouz, and when we had reached his own territory, was to act as inter-

preter ; for he calculated that during the journey he would be so much under the necessity of learning Persian, that before we reached England we should be able perfectly to understand each other.

On the evening before the festival of the death of Omar, the tents of the embassy were pitched at one parasang from the city ; and on the morning of that day, when every good shah was devoutly heaping curses upon that long deceased usurper, precisely at the moment prescribed by the astrologers, Mirza Firouz and suite issued from the Casbin gate. We were followed by our respective friends, who did not cease to put up prayers for our prosperity ; and the day was passed in frequent communications with the city, in order that every part of the baggage and equipages might be got together, previous to ultimate departure.

I, 'tis true, had but few friends to regret my loss. Hitherto, I had formed no ties in Persia ; I had neither house nor child belonging to me, and I left Tehran with few regrets. But it was not so with my companions. The ambassador himself had only one wife and one child ; but he had, besides, a large establishment of slaves, who, as report gave out, contributed to his happiness. Several of his servants had wives and families ;— and it may be imagined what black water* was shed, when it was known that the object of the journey they were about to undertake was Frangistan ; a country which, in the mind of a Persian, scarcely exists but in imagination, where the

* *Ab siah*, black water ; so the Persians figuratively call tears.
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unclean beast is eaten without scruple, and Mahomed the blessed treated as an impostor. I had conversed freely with most of my future companions, and learned that very few of them had ever been beyond Ispahan; so ignorant were they of almost every thing save their own hills and plains. God knows by what magic I had acquired a sort of reputation for knowing a great deal about the manners and customs of Europe; and it was quite amusing to listen to the extraordinary questions which were made me concerning them.— One asked, ‘How shall we get there? underground, or how?’ Another, ‘We hear that their only food is the unlawful beast; how can a Musulman exist there?’ A third said, ‘At least we shall get wine, for we are told they drink nothing else, and that all their water is salt.’ The nazir avowed his intention to take several loads of rice with him, expecting to find none in Europe; and he seemed very much puzzled how to convey a sufficient quantity of Shiraz syrup in bottles, to make his master’s sherbets. The stablemen were anxious to know whether barley grew in the countries they were going to visit, and whether chopped straw was also to be had in abundance. The barber wished to ascertain what quantity of soap he was to convey; and the cook whether pots and pans were common to Franks.

Having been joined by the Englishman, who had clothed himself in our dress for the journey, we at length departed, and turned our horses’ heads towards the land of infidels. I must not omit to mention here, that, out of compliment to us, he permitted his beard to grow, and thus

cleared up the question whether Franks ever could have beards? All those who visited our country looked as if they had been prepared for offices in our harems; but now that we were positive they possessed the seeds of a beard within the soil of their face, we were angry that they did themselves and their country such little justice in our eyes.

Ever since my return from Ispahan I had endeavoured to ascertain upon what terms I stood with my new master, (for such I must call him,) the Mirza Firouz. It had been whispered to me that he was jealous of the selection which the grand vizier had made in appointing me to collect the presents. He very probably would have liked that commission himself, or, at all events, he expected that he might have superintended it, by sending one of his own servants to execute it. I was told, that, dependent as I was upon the prime minister, the ambassador looked upon me in no better light than as a spy upon his actions; and as the grand vizier himself was his enemy, he naturally expected that I should be so also. Therefore, I was advised to keep well upon my guard, to open wide the portals of prudence, and to close the avenues of indiscretion.

In order to do away with those impressions I endeavoured to insinuate myself into his good graces; I well knew his weak points, and there made my advances. My former experience of his character had taught me that with flattery, flattery as palpable as the gold which covers the coppered cupola of the imperial mosque at Tehran, I might, if I chose, always carry his beard in my hand, and make him walk round and round

my little finger. Accordingly, I sought every opportunity of entering into conversation with him by riding close behind him while we were on the road, or standing before him when we made a halt; and I so humbled myself by not presuming to sit unless he bid me, that he became much pleased with my attentions, and with the tone of deference and submission that I had adopted. He had always been famous for the indiscreet use which he made of the great powers of speech with which he was endowed, and every one knew it was owing to that circumstance the grand vizier had determined to inflict upon him the honour of being an ambassador to countries beyond the sun, in the hope of being rid of him and his tongue perhaps for ever.

We had not travelled many parasangs ere he broke loose from every restraint, and gave full vent to his feelings. Surrounded by his servants, who, although taken up with their own thoughts upon leaving their homes, still were ready to take part in what was passing in his, he launched out into the following soliloquy:—

‘I have done the needful to his father’s grave; I will neither spare his wife nor his sisters. May an old ass make love to his mother. By the blessing of the Prophet, a hundred dogs, one after another, will make a corner-stone of his beard, and every day bring their friends to follow their examples! Oh, thou old flint-heart! thou whose stone never sweats*! Inshallah! please Allah! whatever curse was ever conceived, or whatever

* This designation is frequently applied to a miser; as we might say, a skin-flint.

misfortune was ever known to befall, may they all alight on thy head at once !' Then turning round to me, he exclaimed, 'Hajji ! by my soul, and by your own death ! you who know the world, who have eaten the dirt both of Turk and Turcoman, how is it possible that you would consent to eat that of an old niggard ?' Then looking straight forwards, and talking aloud as he rode at the head of the party, 'Well, and now I am an elchi ! and to whom ? to the Franks—to the king of the Franks ! May they and their fathers' graves be eternally defiled ! And I am, forsooth, to leave my family, my child, my country, to go wandering into unknown regions, among beardless infidels, all because this old ill-begotten vizier chooses to think that the shah was beginning to be too mindful of me !'

'Yes,' said I, 'whatever you are pleased to say is true, and I, who am less than a dog, agree in all your feelings. But, in the name of your child, the shah's business must be done by somebody ; if it be not by you, it would be by some one else ; and by your own beard, let me ask, who is there throughout the whole of Iran, excepting yourself, who could undertake it ?'

'There is no one else,' exclaimed Mohammed Beg, the master of the ceremonies ; 'mashallah ! praise be to God ! who is there like our aga now in Persia ? Who is the master of wit, the master of thought, like him ?'

'Yes, yes,' echoed I, 'and the owner of accomplishments, the lord of penetration.'

'A man of judgment and design,' rejoined the master of the ceremonies.

‘Of good heart, good temper, and good fortune,’ answered I.

‘True, true,’ said my companion, ‘there is none his equal.’

‘Besides, Mashallah! look at his person,’ screamed I; ‘a handsome youth, with narrow waist and broad shoulders; a good rider, and one who has not his equal with the spear.’

Upon hearing this, Mirza Firouz, who had permitted the free circulation of our words to enter into both his ears, struck the stirrups into his horse’s flanks, dashed off at a bound, and making a deviation from the road on the fullest speed of his horse, took a long sweep, and, returned to us, apparently quite pleased with his feat. He then suddenly stopt his horse with all the force of his arm a few yards from us.

‘Praise be to God!’ was echoed through all the band when they saw this, which was answered by the ambassador by calling for a *jerid*, or staff, and exclaiming, ‘Tis most true; I swear by the beard of Ali, that in point of horsemanship there is no one like me.’ Then calling out to me, ‘Hajji, in the name of Allah,’ said he, ‘let us make a little play.’ Upon this I dashed my horse onwards, and fled from before him, in the most courtier-like style possible, when, as he followed close upon me, he was pleased to lanch his *jerid* at my head, and inflict thereon so severe a blow, that the stick rebounded to some distance, and left him nothing to wish for. This was a signal for the rest of the party to abandon the sobriety of their steady travelling pace, and to commence a skirmish all over the plain, hooting, kicking,

pulling up, advancing again, and, in short, doing all that which men taking a ride for mere pleasure would do.

When this exuberance of spirits had subsided, and we had again collected into the train of our chief, he asked for his pipe, and smoked and chatted until we reached our first stage.

Notwithstanding the blow on my head which had in a great measure stopped the flow of my applause, I managed to keep up a good countenance; and though I rubbed the sore place, I still could laugh at the jokes of my chief. By way of a jeer, he frequently said, 'Ay, Hajji, it is lucky that the blow was not worse. God was merciful;' which set all those around us upon the broad grin, and increased the satisfaction which he enjoyed at the contemplation of his own dexterity.

CHAPTER VII.

The ambassador exercises his privilege at Arz Roum, and sets at defiance a pasha of three tails.—They reach Constantinople.

WE travelled through Persia by easy stages, and made a halt for a few days at Tabriz, to receive the commands of our illustrious prince royal, previously to quitting the territory of Persia. Having taken charge of his letters for his uncle, the king of England, as well as some additional

presents, we proceeded on our march again, passed Erivan, ranged the foot of Agri-dagh, or the Wild Mountain, slept at the Armenian monastery, and crossed without an accident, the rapid and dangerous stream of the Arpachai. Traversing the frozen region of Armenia, we reached Kara, where we rested two days ; and, without meeting any of the much dreaded Cûrdish robbers on the mountains of Savanlé, at length reposed in Arz Roum.

Here the ambassador was well received by the governor of the province, a pasha of three tails, who did his utmost to make our stay agreeable ; but it was evident that we entered his city at an unlucky hour, because a circumstance, not long after our arrival, took place which destroyed the good understanding that at first had subsisted between the ambassador and the pasha.

Sadek, the running footman, as depraved and worthless as the worst of his fraternity, had shown dispositions to abscond even before we reached Arz Roum, having more than once expressed his sorrow at leaving his own country and its pleasures. We had not been many days arrived, when it was announced to the ambassador that he was nowhere to be found ; and moreover that one of the gold pipe-heads and a horse's gold chain were missing. Instantly a search was instituted ; the pasha's officers, as well as some of the ambassador's own servants, were sent in pursuit, and in two days after the fugitive was brought back, and convicted of the theft. He was seized, tied hand and foot, and the ambassador, in the hearing of the Turkish officers, proclaimed his intention of

cutting off his ears. This was reported to the pasha, who, feeling that no punishment of that description ought to be inflicted except by himself, and that to permit such an act in his own city would be throwing away his consequence and authority, he determined upon making a remonstrance with the ambassador: and ordered his principal chaoush, an old grave Turk with a white beard, to carry a very civil message to that purport.

The ambassador was surrounded by all his servants when the chaoush entered, and was still in the height of his fury at the delinquency of his running footman. He was pouring out a torrent of words, 'cursing the day he had set out on this expedition, then the vizier who sent him, then the Turks and their country, when the solemn son of Osman interposed his *selam aleikum*, peace be with you! and took his seat with all due reverence.

'What has happened?' exclaimed the ambassador to his visiter.

'Nothing,' answered the chaoush.

'Have you seen what abomination that rascally countryman of ours has been committing?' said the ambassador. 'Please Heaven, his father shall burn ere long. We are not such asses to let him escape gratis. Until I have got his ears into my pocket, not a drop of water passes my lips; of that make your mind easy, O effendi!'

'The pasha, my master,' said the Turk, 'makes prayers for your happiness, and has desired me to inform you that such things cannot be.'

'What things cannot be?' exclaimed the ambassador with the greatest vivacity. 'What cannot be? Shall I not, then, cut off his ears? Ah!

you know but little of Mirza Firouz if you think so! By the sacred beard of the Prophet, by the salt of the shah, by the pasha's soul, and by your death, I would as soon cut off his ears (ears did I say? By Ali, and head into the bargain!) as I would drink a cup of water. We are rare madmen we Persians; we do not stand upon trifles.'

'But,' said the Turk, totally unmoved by the volubility and matter of this speech, 'my master orders me to say that he is one of three tails, and that, therefore, no ears can be cut off in Arz Roum except by himself.'

'Three tails!' exclaimed the Mirza, 'three, do you say? If the pasha has three, I have fifteen; and if that won't do, I have a hundred; and if that be not enough, tell him that I have one thousand and one tails. Go, for the love of Allah, go; and tell him moreover, since he brings his three tails on the account, that the ears are off, off, off.' Then calling aloud to his ferash, and to two or three other servants, he said in a most peremptory tone, 'Go, rascals, quick, fly, bring Sadek's ears to me this instant. I'll three tail him! If he had fifty ears I would cut them off.' Then turning to the chaoush, who had already got on his feet in readiness to depart, he said, 'May your shadow never be less. May God protect you. Make my prayers acceptable to the pasha, and tell him again if he has three tails, I, by the blessing of the Prophet, have fifteen.'

Upon this the Turk, exclaiming from the bottom of his gullet '*La illaha illallah!* there is but one God,' walked slowly away, and had not proceeded many steps before he met the Persians

coming up, bearing the ears of their countryman, or something very like them, on the cap of a saucepan, and who did not fail to exhibit them to the phlegmatic Osmanli with appropriate expressions of superciliousness.

The pasha, enraged at this treatment, soon made our residence in his city too disagreeable to invite us to stay longer than necessary, and accordingly we very soon after departed, leaving the cropped Sadek to find his way back to Persia in the best manner he was able. It was, however, known afterwards that he departed with his ears on his head; and that the bits of flesh exhibited on the lid of the saucepan were slices of a young kid; for whether the executioners of their master's commands knew that it was in no wise in his nature to be cruel, or whether they were the culprit's personal friends, it is certain that he fared very tenderly for his roguery.

After having traversed the long and tedious road through Turkey, quarrelling at every post-house, and increasing our stock of hatred for the sectaries of Omar, we at length desecrated the cupolas and minarets of the capital of the Blood-drinker,* the vast and magnificent Constantinople.

The ambassador was received with proper ceremony and respect by the Turkish authorities, and a large house at Scutari allotted to him and his suite. A mehmander was also appointed, whose duty was to collect and distribute the daily allowance of provisions granted for the use of the embassy, according to the established usages of the

* A title by which the sultan of Turkey is known in Persia.

empire. The young infidel, who had accompanied us, and who now made himself tolerably well understood in our language, left us, and took up his quarters among his own people ; and shortly after preceded us to a city called *Giaour Ismir*, or the Infidel Smirna, in order to prepare a ship to conduct us to England.

The ambassador, soon after his arrival, visited the grand vizier, and in succession most of the principal Turkish officers, many of whom took a great liking to him, and seemed to take much pleasure in his conversation. However he might be pleased with this, still his native hatred for the Turks never forsook him, and he never lost an opportunity of expressing it, when he could do so with propriety. One day, at a confidential interview with the grand vizier, at which I was permitted to be present, that minister, celebrated for being a pure and bigoted Musselman, talking of the power of the Franks in general, of their institutions, and of their obstinate adherence to their own religious faith, exclaimed to the ambassador, ' Ah, my friend, when will the world be cleansed from this most accursed race of unbelievers ? What is to be done ?'

' I tell you what,' answered the Mirza, ' Allah must do it ; for, between you and I, I do not think that you ever will.'

On another occasion, when on a visit to the mufti, that great chief of the law, having sufficiently deplored the ambassador's evil destiny which led him to quit the land of the true faith, in order to inhabit the regions of infidelity, said, ' Great will be the mass of impurity with which

you will be overwhelmed before you return. How shall you ever cleanse yourself therefrom ?'

'Inshallah ! please Heaven,' answered my chief, 'by not returning through Constantinople.'

The ambassador was once invited to an assembly of free livers, where wine was introduced, accompanied by singing and music. This brought on a discussion upon the respective merits of Turkish and Persian music, when a young effendi, who showed great pretensions to wit, said, loud enough for us to hear, 'As for the effect which their music produces, we know that when a Persian sings we always expect that it will rain.'

'And we in Persia have always remarked,' exclaimed the ambassador, 'that when a Turk sings he sets all the asses braying in response.'

CHAPTER VIII.

Mirza Firouz receives a present of a Circassian slave. — The history of her captivity is described.

A FEW days before our departure, the ambassador sent presents to the principal Turkish officers, and received others in return. He had formed a great intimacy with one of the secretaries of state, a jovial spirit, who was addicted to pleasure, and particularly fond of Persian poetry and literature. To him he presented his own favourite riding-horse, accompanied by a beautiful copy of Hafiz ;

and as he was anxious that they should be well received, he requested me to present them myself, with the proper compliments. Yarak Effendi, for that was his name, expressed himself greatly pleased at this mark of his friend's attention, and professed himself at a loss what to offer in return. He consulted me for a long while upon what I thought would be most agreeable to him. Of shawls he knew that he had abundance. Pelisses and furs he also knew were common in Persia. Stuffs and brocades were more beautifully manufactured with us than in Turkey. English goods he would not offer; we were going whence they came. Amber-headed pipes the Persians did not use; and we neither prized their horse-furniture nor their carpets. What then was to be done? At length a thought struck him, and he exclaimed, 'I have it! I have it! The ambassador, I know him, is an admirer of female beauty. He shall not go among the infidels to put his beard into their hands. He shall have my new Circassian slave; she is beautiful as the moon; and it is scarcely an hour since she has made the profession of the true faith. I brought her out of the ship she came in but yesterday, from that arch man-stealer, Khersis Oglu, and he assures me that she is of Circassian blood, and a princess; but I suppose the kafir lies.' Then addressing himself particularly to me, he said, 'May I venture to send her to your aga?'

I professed ignorance of his tastes, and said that I would soon inform him of the ambassador's wishes on that head, not doubting that if there was a possibility of taking such an addition to his

suite with him, that he would not hesitate in so doing.

Accordingly I returned to Mirza Firouz, who received the effendi's proposal at first with ecstasy; then with hesitation; and at length, by way of not doing an uncivil act, he let him know that he could not have hit upon a present that would be more agreeable to him.

At the close of day she arrived, veiled from head to foot, mounted on a horse, and escorted by the effendi's black man slave, who received a handsome present in money for his trouble. She was immediately conducted into the ambassador's house, who had ordered a suitable place for her reception; and when he went to visit her, we collected ourselves into a body, and freely discussed the probable consequences of this proceeding.

'He will eat a good allowance of his wife's slipper,' exclaimed Ismael Beg, the nazir, 'if once he gets within reach of it, should she become acquainted with what he has done.'

'Ah!' said Taki, the ferash, who seemed to know much of the interior of his household, 'the khanum is at a great distance now: and until that time comes the world may have turned upside down.'

'Were she a Georgian,' remarked Seid, 'there would be no harm done, for they are tractable; but being a Circassian, 'tis time to put our trust in God. They are a bad race.'

'Georgian or Circassian, Lesgui or Abkhasians,' said the master of the ceremonies, 'they are all children of the devil together. I hope the arrival of this stranger among us may not bring ashes upon our heads in a foreign land.'

‘I tell you what,’ said I, ‘whatever we may think on this occasion is all very well, provided we recollect that she is the elchi’s property ; and although she is one woman among so many men, yet, mind ye ! he alone is her master.’

‘Yes, O yes !’ they all exclaimed ; ‘ whose dogs are we, that we should think otherwise ?’

The next morning the ambassador, of his own accord, gave me the history of his slave, which he had got from her own mouth. It was briefly this, that she was the daughter of a Circassian chief, who lived near the banks of the Black Sea, of a character so lawless and depraved, that even among his own countrymen he was called *Shaitan Bacheh*, or Child of Satan. His cruelties and drunkenness would have been of little consequence had they been merely the effect of sudden passion ; but gambling was the vice to which he sacrificed every other feeling ; and this led him to commit acts of unheard-of enormity. To one of these acts this poor slave had fallen a victim. He had gambled to such an excess with a neighbouring chieftain, a man of greater power than himself, that he was totally ruined ; and determining to make one desperate effort to retrieve his losses, he resolved upon selling all his family as slaves to the Turkish merchants who made that traffic. He accordingly struck a bargain with one of the most enterprising of that profession ; and on a certain day it was agreed that he would furnish a fixed quantity of slaves, both male and female, who should be embarked in the vessel waiting off the coast for that purpose. When he had been apprised of the arrival of the ship, upon pretext of giving an enter-

tainment to his family, he collected the different individuals composing it under his roof, and invited them to join him in emptying certain skins of wine which had been provided for the occasion. When he saw that the men were sufficiently intoxicated for his purpose, at a signal given his house was surrounded by a host of armed Turks, the crew of the slave-ship, and they immediately made prisoners of all the company, carrying away the drunkards like logs, and forcing off the women. Besides herself, who was his daughter, he had sold his wife and two of her brothers, with one of his own, his father and mother, two women servants, two aunts, and an uncle ; and by way of completing the dozen, he stole a priest who was riding quietly by at the time, and added him to the party. As soon as they were embarked, the vessel set all sail, and not many days after they reached Constantinople, when she was immediately brought up by the secretary of state.

The ambassador said that her Circassian name was Mariam, but that he intended to call her *Dilferib*, or the Heart-enslaver, owing to the great fascination of her manner. He described her as being low in stature, and of a round and melon-formed person, but possessing eyes of surprising size and fire, and a complexion as verdant* as even the most celebrated beauties of Iran. He seemed quite elated with his acquisition, and expressed his intention to have her instructed in all the arts and accomplishments which the Europeans are capable of teaching. She was to become

* *Sväs*, or green, is a word used in Persia, denoting a brunette.

mistress of embroidery, of tailoring, of making stockings, and twisting ringlets. She was to learn to sing, dance, and play musical instruments. In short, he intended to make her so accomplished a slave that, in case some conciliatory presents were ever necessary to the shah, he might have her ready at hand to secure his peace. At present he described her as totally ignorant. She could give no account of her religion; she could neither read nor write; and her whole morality seemed that of revenging a family quarrel, and showing hospitality to the stranger. She was perfectly agreeable to become a follower of the blessed Mahomed, and pronounced the profession of the true faith without a moment's hesitation. 'What she may prove to be in character,' said the ambassador, 'Allah only knows; that will entirely depend upon my good or ill luck, and upon the position of the planets at the time of her entering my house.'

CHAPTER IX.

The embassy leave Constantinople, reach Smirna, and embark on board an English ship.—Their reception on board is described.

THE ambassador having received intelligence from '*Giaour Ismir*' that a ship was in readiness to receive him and his suite, in order to convey him to London (for so is the foot of the English throne called), we proceeded on our journey in the same manner as we had travelled from Persia, with this difference, that *Dilferib*, the Circassian, who now had been put under the special charge of the two black slaves, Mahboob and Seid, was mounted upon a mule, closely veiled from head to foot. Having passed the two large cities of Brousa and Manesia, traversing a country which produces every thing that can contribute to the happiness and well-being of man, we at length reached the city of our destination, situated on the borders of a magnificent bay, and called infidel, because it harbours many European merchants, many Greeks, and many Armenians, who drink wine openly, and whose hogs are allowed to walk about the streets. Upon entering it we blew over our shoulders to keep the impurity of its inhabitants from us, and then took up our quarters in a house which the Turkish government had

been enjoined to prepare for the ambassador's reception.

We had been greeted a parasang before our entry into the city by the young Inglis, who, in quality of mehmandar, had proceeded from Constantinople to prepare our way ; and he informed the ambassador that two ships were in readiness, the one, as he described it, a large ship belonging to the shah of his country, destined for the use of the embassy ; and another hired from a merchant, for the purpose of conveying the horses. He assured us that every thing was ready for our reception, that all the provisions were on board, sheep for our *kabobs*, goats for our milk, fowls, geese, ducks, and turkeys, and plenty of water. There was only one thing which he wished to ascertain, namely, whether the ambassador liked to sleep in a bed which, by his description, was made to move backwards and forwards, or one which remained stationary.

Ignorant as we were of the nature of a ship, and of every circumstance attending a sea life, we became much puzzled at his questions. In the first place, that a ship should, from his description, be a farmyard, containing all the animals he had enumerated, surprised us not a little ; but why a bed should be made to move about was extremely puzzling ; and why it should even be a question, whether a man should lie quiet, or be tossed backwards and forwards, was still to be explained ; and therefore the ambassador wisely left the matter at rest for the present, until we should be better able to judge for ourselves.

This, and various other circumstances, gave us

great matter for discussion, and increased our impatience to see the Frank ship, and all the wonders which we anticipated that it would contain. The mehmandar was not aware of the circumstance which had added the Circassian to our party, and as he was acquainted with our customs, which required the seclusion of women from the gaze of men, he hastened on board to make the necessary arrangements, and left us to prepare our baggage for immediate departure.

The ambassador was very anxious not to leave the shore and set foot on board excepting at a fortunate hour; and he consulted thereupon his master of ceremonies, Mohamed Beg, who had a good knowledge of astrology, having studied for some time under the celebrated Mirza Cossim of Ispahan. He did not discover any fortunate conjunction of the planets for a week to come; and we were making up our minds to remain quietly smoking the pipe of patience, when, the second morning after our arrival at Smirna, our baggage having been embarked the day before, the mehmandar, attended by the captain of the ship, came to announce that all was ready, that the wind was fair, and that we must embark. This had not met the ambassador's calculation, and he positively said that he would not stir. The want of a good moment, said he, was not to be disregarded; and whatever any body else might think, he for his part valued his life and the beard upon his chin too much, to commence such a hazardous undertaking as that of embarking upon a ship commanded by infidels, to go to infidels' countries, without having the full sanction of his own astrologers. He was

strengthened in his resolution by Mohamed Beg, who, strong in his science, and obstinate in his converse with the heavens, declared that to go, merely at the invitation of an infidel, who, because the wind blew fair, thought that no other requisite was wanting to a prosperous voyage, would be downright madness; and accordingly they both resolved that nothing should make them stir. In vain, both mehmandar and captain said that the most fortunate moment surely was that when the wind was fair; and that if they permitted it to shift, they might not be able to sail for many a week; nothing could avail, and they were about to walk away in despair, when, as the best of all good luck would have it, the ambassador sneezed twice. Every one having complimented him, he said, 'This is a good omen; if the stars were now but propitious, what an excellent moment for departure!' At that very instant Mohamed Beg also sneezed twice! We were all in ecstasy. 'Praise be to God, and, thanks to Allah!' came from every lip, and there was not a dissenting voice; the omen was too strongly pronounced, that further objections should be made, and the ambassador immediately announced his readiness to proceed.

We then without delay, putting our right legs foremost on crossing the threshold of the house, proceeded in a body to the beach, where boats had been provided to take us on board. There seemed to be considerable ceremony among the Franks on this occasion. The ambassador and I, and one of his slaves bearing his shoes, were placed in the largest boat with the mehmandar

and the captain ; while another conveyed the rest of the suite and the Circassian. The head of the stable, with his grooms and stable-boys, were embarked on board the horse-ship.

We had reached the frigate all but about one *maidan*, when, wonderful to behold, at the sound of a shrill whistle, out jumped hundreds of what we took to be rope-dancers ; for none but the celebrated Kheez-Ali of Shiraz, inimitable throughout Asia for his feats on the tight rope, could have done what they did. They appeared to balance themselves in rows upon ropes scarcely perceptible to the eye, ascending higher and higher in graduated lines, until on the very tip-top of the mast stood, what we imagined to be either a *gin* or a *dive*, for nothing mortal surely ever attempted such a feat. We had no sooner reached the deck whither we had all been whisked up (the blessed Ali best knows how), than instantly such discharges of cannon took place, that with excess of amazement our livers turned into water, and our brains were dried up.

‘ In the name of Allah ! ’ exclaimed the elchi, ‘ what does this mean ? Is this hell ? or is it meant for heaven ? What news are arrived ? ’ All this he was exclaiming, while the captain, standing before him, made low bows, and seemed to claim his admiration. And it was only when the firing had ceased, and that our ears had somewhat recovered the shocks they had received, that the mehmandar stepped up and said, this was done in honour of his excellency, and was the acknowledged mode in England of treating persons of distinction. ‘ May your shadow never be less, ’ rejoined the

ambassador. 'I am very sensible of the honour,' at the same time thrusting his fingers into his ears, 'and I assure you that this mark of distinction will leave a lasting impression upon me. But what is the use of discharging so many cannon, and wasting so much precious gunpowder? You have fired away more powder than our shah did in the celebrated siege of Tûs, when, with three balls and one cannon, he discomfited a host of Yuzbeks, and kept the whole of their kingdom in fear of his power for ever after. But how many cannon have you on board, in the name of the Prophet?' said he. The mehmandar answered, 'Forty-four.'—'Do you mean actually forty-four?' said his excellency, 'or do you mention that number as indefinite, signifying a great many, as we say *chehel minar*, forty pillars, when we talk of the ruins of Persepolis; or the *chehel ten*, or forty bodies, when we would describe the many saints buried in the mausoleum near Shiraz?'

'I mean actually forty-four,' said the mehmandar, appealing to the captain of the ship, who was standing near. 'But that is a mere trifle,' added he. 'Our king has many ships that carry three times this number, and at least fifty bearing the same number; and when all the guns which are carried about from one end of the world to the other are enumerated, you must cease counting by hundreds, but take to thousands.'

'There is but one God!' exclaimed the ambassador, putting his finger in his mouth at the same time, and deeply cogitating. 'You see what I said before is true,' turning towards me and others of the suite who were gathered round him; 'I

told you once before, that the English dig up their cannon all ready made in the mine, and this proves it. Centuries, with all the blacksmiths of Iran at work from morning to night, would never make so many guns.'

'Yes, yes,' was answered by us. 'We believe it all,' said one. 'These Franks are devils, not men,' said another. 'Wonderful things shall we have to say when we return to Persia,' said a third. Then all at once, as if by magic, we saw immense sails loosened from places where the eye before saw nothing but wood and rope; and ere a mollah could have counted his beads and said a hundred 'God forgive me's,' we began to move at a rapid rate through the water, and an universal commotion among the houses, ships, trees, and mountains which surrounded us appeared to have taken place, and we were given to the mercy of the waves.

'We are gone and doubly gone, now,' said the ambassador; 'we are in the hands of Allah!'

'God be with us! oh, Mahomed! oh, Ali,' exclaimed I. 'Ali send us all safe back,' groaned the master of the ceremonies.

'*Ameen! ameen!*' echoed the remainder of the suite.

CHAPTER X.

*The novelty of ship-board to Persians is described.—
They learn the difference between astronomy and
astrology.*

WHEN we had exhausted our first astonishment on the deck, we descended into a room ornamented with looking-glasses, and fitted up with various conveniencies suited to the habits and customs of Europeans. And here the question of the bed, which had before been unintelligible, was made clear to our understandings ; for it was a sort of hammock, and resembled those used by the Armenians at Julfa, where one end of it is fastened to a beam, while the other is fixed to the wall, and thus swings backwards and forwards. The ambassador chose to sleep in one of these. I extended my mattress on the ground in an outer room, and the servants spread their carpets between the guns, hanging up their musquets, swords, and pistols upon pegs, as they were wont to do in caravanserais and post-houses, when travelling on dry ground.

We passed the first night in a manner not to be described. To say that our heads went round, that our stomachs were thrown at variance with our livers, and our livers were made to contend with our heart-strings, would only express half our miseries. The tossing to and fro, the extra-

ordinary noises, the newness of the smells, the strange jargon which struck our ears, in short, the novelty of the scene altogether, kept our astonished senses in one constant stretch, and caused us to make various original reflections. Mohamed Beg, the master of the ceremonies, who never failed to say his five prayers per day, be he where he might, having spread his carpet on the deck, was about making his adoration on seven members* when the ship gave a toss which threw him upon his nose. This set those of the Franks who were looking at a sight so new on board their ship a-laughing, and threw us all into a melancholy fit of musing, bewailing our hard fate to be thus cast among people who mocked our religion, and who looked upon our Prophet and his followers in no better light than as swine in their sheds. However, a repetition of 'God is great!' and 'God is merciful!' made us recollect in whose hands we were, and that if it was our lot to be polluted, destiny had all the blame.

Awaking the first morning after our embarkation, a sight totally new presented itself. Life and the world seemed to have departed from us, and we now only saw the outsides of things. Where was Tehran? Where the splendour of our shah? his gilded palaces, his iron clad warriors, and his brilliant courtiers? Where was Ispahan? Where the lofty Demawend? Where the plains of Sultanieh, and the wilds of Mazanderan? The capital, and even the whole dominion of the

* Adoration on seven members is a mode of worship common to Mahometans; the hands, feet, knees, and forehead touching the ground at the same moment.

Blood-drinker, had passed from us, and here we were, a speck in the ocean, seen only by the clouds, passing the shadows of lands painted at immeasurable distances from us, and in the hands of infidels, who were carrying us God knows whither ; with whom we could hold no converse ; who could neither tell us why they went one way instead of the other ; why they chose to make a path in the sea, when there was none ; and for what good reason the ship went straight forwards, when there was nothing to hinder it going backwards. Who among us knew where England was ? Not a soul. All that we saw of sea and sky might be the country of the infidels, for aught we knew ; and that might perhaps be our ultimate destination, for these objects seemed as likely to belong to them as to any one else. But what could be the use of such a country to any one, seeing that all its inhabitants must be enclosed in boxes, like the one in which we were ; and that, running away from each other at their pleasure, no government could exist, no shah could control them, no one could levy fines upon them ? In short, the more we argued among ourselves upon our situation, the more we became perplexed ; nor did the explanations which we received from the mehmandar much clear up our difficulties, for he talked to us of things so foreign to our understandings, that we were for the present obliged to drop the anchor of our curiosity in the harbour of expectation.

As long as we were near the land, we understood how sailors might track their way ; but when once fairly out of sight of every thing, save heaven.

and water, what was there to guide them? However, we began to acquire some intelligence on this head, for, upon the day when we first lost sight of land, we discovered that the ship was filled with astrologers. At about noon many of those whom we had looked upon as mere idle young men, appeared on the deck with astrolabes in their hands, and fell to observing the sun. Even boys handled this instrument of wisdom; and, according to the answer which they gave to our questions, it seems that they were perfectly satisfied that we were going right, and that the heavens were propitious to our undertaking. Mohamed Beg, not to appear deficient in knowledge, also produced his astrolabe, but could not make any of the observations which he was wont to do at Ispahan, when he studied under the celebrated Mirza Cossim, because he declared that we had changed our stars, and that those he now saw were different from those of his own country. However, the science which the Franks possessed, we presumed, was different from ours; and they endeavoured to show us the difference between astronomy and astrology. Although we evidently drew our conclusions from the same sources, yet our objects were not the same; for the ambassador, not feeling well, and desirous to take medicine, sent to one of these star-gazers, through the mehmandar, to inquire whether the heavenly bodies were propitious to such an event; and he received for answer, that their science only extended to settling the latitude and longitude of the ship, and that they had not yet learned to decide what might be the best moment for medicating his

excellency's inside. This gave a sort of superiority in our eyes to Mohamed Beg, who, in this instance, very valiantly decided, by some method of calculation peculiarly his own, that bleeding and purging might at present be used with great safety.

But still we could not overcome our astonishment at seeing astrology practised by a parcel of beardless boys. What in our country was the avocation of experienced men, who had passed their lives in watching the stars, and settling proper hours for each action of the life of man, here was undertaken by mere children. I was assured that any one of the observers with the astrolabe could inform me within a mile of the exact spot we stood upon the earth; and to prove that, it would only be necessary to watch the time when we should see land, which it was expected to take place that very evening at sunset. As we had now been at sea more than a week, we longed to ascertain whether countries besides Turkey and Persia did actually exist; and therefore strained all our eyes, in company with the English astrologers, to discover the land. At length, just as the sun had taken its plunge into the furthest corner of the deep, a streak was descried in the horizon, which every one affirmed was land, and I was called upon to acknowledge the accuracy of the astrologers. Mohamed Beg, who, in his own estimation, looked upon himself quite as great a person as Abū Mazer*, the father of conversa-

* Abū Mazer, which, rendered in Arabic, means the father of conversation, was a celebrated astronomer and astrologer, known in Europe as Alhazeni.

tion himself, doubted, and assured those who would listen to him, that his science was preferable to that of our navigators, inasmuch as he could guard against things unseen; whereas the English only foretold the appearance of things visible. And, on this occasion, I well recollect that Mohamed Beg had a memorable argument with the mehmandar, who, endeavouring to make us comprehend the object of the observations made daily at noon, asserted, that the earth upon which we stood went round the sun; whereas it is a well-known fact, approved by all the learned in Persia since the days of Jemsheed, that the sun has no other business than to revolve round us. I cannot well record all that was said on both sides, but this I remember, that Mohamed Beg, being disturbed by the newness of the mehmandar's observations, finished the discourse by saying, that if he were in Persia, on his own territory, he would soon find unanswerable reasons why what he advanced was true.

CHAPTER XI.

They arrive at Malta.—Are indignant at the restrictions of quarantine, and hold communication with the English governor.

THE next morning we found ourselves close to the shores of an island called Malta, which the mehmandar informed us had formerly belonged to a band of fighting dervishes, whose only business was to take unnatural oaths, and fight against the children of the true faith. But it seems that their destinies were of no avail, when opposed to those of Mahomed the blessed, since they no longer exist, whereas Islam flourishes. One of their principal laws was, that they could not marry. Then how could they continue to exist? 'Tis evident their lawgiver was duller than the father of stupidity.* Had they been allowed even half the number of wives which the Prophet allows his followers, perhaps they still might have flourished.

The avidity with which we eyed the shore, as we sailed into the harbour, may be better conceived than described. We saw new men, new women, new buildings; we heard a new language, and new sounds. If all the caravans that traverse

* *Abu. Jahel*, the father of stupidity, so the Arabians call the sea.

Persia and Arabia were collected together, the united din of their bells could not be greater than the eternal jingle of those which issued from numerous minarets that were seen to rise, in various odd and fantastic shapes, throughout the town. Ismael Beg, the nazir, well remarked, that it was evident, from this circumstance alone, we had got into a Christian country; for here they might ring their bells and welcome, whereas no dog of them would presume so to do in our cities, without having dearly purchased the permission. And he added, such a quantity of bells as we now heard ringing would make a handsome revenue for any one of the shah's sons.

Our first impulse, as soon as the ship was at anchor, was to endeavour to rush on shore; but what was our surprise and indignation when we were informed that immediate access was not permitted; that forty days at least must pass over our heads before we could be pronounced clean? As soon as we heard this our rage knew no bounds, and we proceeded at once to the presence of the ambassador to vent it.

'In the name of Allah,' said I, speaking for the rest, 'are we come all this way that we should be called unclean? We are Mussulmans. To this day we have heard of nothing unclean, except it be these dogs of Christians. We can only be unclean from the pollution which we have acquired by living with them. In the name of the Prophet, we desire to return to Persia. If you are not permitted to land here, much less will they permit you to land in England, which is their principal country, upon which the foot of their thrones rests.'

‘ You do not speak amiss, Hajji Baba,’ said the ambassador to me in a quiet manner, unusual to himself. ‘ I also am in a state of amazement, but the business of the shah must be done ; to eat dirt in his service is now to be our daily occupation, and eat it we must, and say, thanks be to Allah ! The mehmandar has endeavoured to make me comprehend the reason of this regulation. He says it is a precaution to guard against the plague ; and is not deviated from throughout the whole of the kingdoms of Frangistan, even in favour of kings ; that any one attempting to escape is shot like a wild beast ; and that this would be the ceremony either of us would undergo should we resist. Such being the case, what is to be done but to sit down in patience ? These people have no belief in *takdeer*, predestination. They do not like to die, if they can avoid it ; and, to say the truth, I think they are right.’

‘ But we have no plague,’ exclaimed Taki, the *ferash*. ‘ We are men of Iran, where the plague never comes. Let them look upon the Turks, and welcome, as unclean ; but we are Persians.’

Mohamed Beg made some wise observations upon the unerring decrees of fate, and quoted the Koran with great effect ; and at the same time he added, if it was not our destiny to set foot on shore at Malta, nothing more need be said, and we must be content to take events as they chose to come.

This allayed our impatience, which was much appeased when we found that we were to proceed on our voyage on the following day in a much larger ship, which was pointed out to us, and

which indeed looked like a floating castle. Our eyes were much struck at all we saw, and the power of the ship in which we now were sank in our estimation when in every creek and corner we discovered cannons upon cannons, in such vast numbers, that if we were to give a true account of them in Persia nobody would believe us. We now began to find for the first time, how it happened that the English had got possession of India, and resolved in our minds that all the stories which we had heard about their being governed by old women must be nonsense. With such cannons and such ships to carry them about, who would not conquer the world?

Our ship soon held much communication with the shore, and we were informed that the ambassador's arrival had produced a strange commotion, which very soon proved itself by the quantities of boats which surrounded us. It was reported, among other things, that the ship carrying the horses was loaded with the ambassador's wives, and consequently attracted as much of the public attention as ours. The circassian slave in the meantime had not stirred from the corner in which he had been placed from the moment of our getting on board; and so little did she know of what was doing, that long after our arrival at Malta she inquired 'What may the news be?'

Before we were transferred from the small ship into the larger one, the ambassador received a visit from the governor of the city, who, as he came alongside, pointed to a yellow flag floating on the top of our mast as an excuse for not coming on board, and which we found was the signal of un-

cleanness. Through the interpretation of the mehmandar he apologized for not having been able to receive the ambassador on shore, to treat him in a manner suitable to his rank; but he again assured us that regulations concerning quarantine were so strict that even an angel would not be admitted as pure if coming from Turkey. He then stated that he had received recent intelligence from his government, who had apprised him of the possibility of the ambassador touching at Malta on his way to England, and he had been enjoined to do every thing in his power to forward his voyage, since the whole country of England, from the king to the peasant, were anxious to see him and do him honour. He then finished his speech by making many special inquiries concerning the health of the shah and the political state of Persia.

Upon this, Mirza Firouz, thinking it necessary to return so flattering a speech, and also to place the prosperity of his country in the best possible light, assured the governor that when last we had heard from the shah he was enjoying the greatest sanity of brain, and was even rejoicing in his palace at Sultanieh at the arrival of twenty mule-loads of rebels' heads, which had just been sent him from the disaffected provinces of Khorassan and Mazanderan, which had been perfectly devastated by his victorious troops: thanks to the efforts of his majesty's twenty-fifth son. He hoped that this news would gladden the governor's heart, and spread universal satisfaction throughout England when known there.

The governor said that this was unheard-of prosperity, and, as well as we could understand

our interpreter, made suitable compliments on the occasion. He then thought it necessary to give us some intelligence in return, which, whatever he might think of it, did not sound to our ears by any means favourable. From what we could gather, a civil war was raging in England, for in great exultation he assured us that the viziers of the shah of England, who, as in Turkey, it seems command his armies, had gained a signal victory over a rebel people called 'Opposition.'

The mehmander entered into long explanations upon this subject, which we could in no wise understand; and however he and the governor might seem to look upon their king's government as more firmly fixed by this event, still we doubted whether there was wisdom in proceeding on an embassy to a country full of internal broils, and which, as experience had taught us in Persia, could never be completely settled until one shah remained its undisputed master. It was evident that the rebels were still strong, since, by the governor's own account, although daily defeated, yet they were not dispersed. 'Ah!' said Mohamed Beg, 'the Franks may talk of their management in matters of government; but here is evidently a great want of some Eastern wisdom; a little of the *tutiai dowlet*, or state collyrium,* is necessary for them, and, by the blessing of Allah, you,' turning towards Mirza Firouz, 'you are the man to teach them how to apply it.'

* Collyrium, the powder of antimony, is constantly applied by Eastern people to strengthen the eyesight, and, as a remedy for national affairs, is frequently sarcastically recommended to those whose conduct is open to reproach.

At this the ambassador looked pleased, and hearing us all exclaim *Barrikallah*, he curled up his whiskers and said, 'that the outset of our voyage, 'tis true, had been disastrous, for so we must think when a true believer is counted unclean by an infidel; but we had now proceeded too far to think of returning; and although things had looked ill, yet he hoped that all would prove favourable at last.' Therefore, as soon as the governor had taken his leave, we permitted ourselves to be conducted to our new ship. We parted with regret from our friends on board the smaller vessel, who appeared very anxious to have proceeded with us to England; but when we had been safely placed upon the deck of the large ship, we felt nothing but delight and amazement.

CHAPTER XII.

Hajji Baba describes a large English ship.—Of the individuals whom he meets on board, and his difficulties at adopting European manners.

THE ambassador was received with great ceremony on board by the captain, an old man, who, as we conceived, out of compliment to us, had sprinkled his head with a white dust so nicely applied that it did not shake from him. What other motive could he have had for so doing, excepting to evince his humility? He stood with his hat off,

evidently to exhibit his dust, making many fine speeches ; and then, to show that he did not restrict himself to words only, ordered an immense discharge of his cannon. He then paraded us about the ship, where we found every thing that the heart of man could desire, excepting horses and a green field to gallop over. We here saw nearly three times more guns than in the last ship, and enough men to form the population of one of our towns. Women were there besides, but not in great numbers ; indeed so few, we were told, that the arrangements preserved in our harems might here be reversed, and, if properly distributed, fifty men at least would become the slaves and form the household of one woman. As great plenty reigned within board as if we had the bazar of Is-pahan at hand to supply us. We had fruits of all descriptions, as much milk and butter as if the tents of the Iliots were pitched close at hand ; and of wine and meat there was a store.

Altogether, the scene that we here witnessed was one which struck us with more astonishment than any thing we had yet seen out of our own country. ' Ah,' said we, ' if the shah had but one such ship in the Caspian, he would burn the fathers of the Russians ! ' ' Inshallah ! please God,' was repeated all round, and we lived in the hope that our ambassador once established in England, it would not be difficult to learn how to build ships ; seeing that the Turks, a nation acknowledged by all mankind to be the asses of the human race, made them, and recollecting that the Persians were endowed with more ingenuity and ability than all the rest of the world together.

The captain then brought his *naibs*, or lieutenants and officers, introducing them to the ambassador, and among the number he specially presented a doctor, who was enjoined to take care of our health. He moreover led a Frank priest before us, who was the only living sign we had yet seen of religion among the infidels, for never had we seen one of them even stand still and pray.

The priest was distinguished from the others by wearing black clothes. His chin and lip was just as closely shaved as the rest, and he drank wine without scruple. The doctor, too, had no distinguishing marks of wisdom about him; but it was evident that he was a man of science, for upon feeling my pulse and looking at my tongue, he asked me if I did not feel an ache precisely on a spot on my head which he touched; whether my eyes did not burn, and if my appetite was not gone; discoveries which Mirza Akhmak would not have made in a moon—no, not with all the talismans and astrologers of Persia to assist him.

Having got acquainted with this company, we descended into the apartments below, which were much more spacious and numerous than those of the small ship we had left; and here we found three individuals, two men and one woman, evidently of a higher class than those who form the equipage of ships, and they were presented to the ambassador in their turn. The lady, for she was doubtless a *khanum*, was surprisingly beautiful, of a style of beauty totally different from that of our country-women, being fair as a young moon, with hair like the gold wire that forms the head-dress of a bride in Persia. She did not attempt to hide

her face when we and the other men entered, nor was there any veil at hand for her to do so had she wished it ; but she addressed the ambassador without embarrassment or coyness, and at once, as it was easy to perceive, enslaved his heart for ever. Through the interpretation of the mehmandar she inquired after the Circassian, and offered her good offices to make her stay on board agreeable ; but the ambassador assured her that she was nothing but a slave, and that if she could only get a corner to set in, unseen by any one, she required no greater happiness.

One of the men was a son of the road, as the wandering Arabs say, a traveller. He was evidently a person of experience, for his hair was white, which he might have kept from the gaze of the world had he always worn a turban or head-dress, according to our Eastern fashion. The account which he gave of himself was to us incomprehensible ; for it seems he was travelling about the world at his own expense for a Frank king, to collect birds, beasts, and fishes, which as fast as he caught he stuffed. The moment he perceived us he eyed us from head to foot, as if he were inspecting horses or camels ; and his curiosity was afterwards explained by the knowledge we acquired of his pursuits ; —it was evident that, looking upon us foreign animals, he longed to kill and to stuff us. The other was what the interpreter called a *shahzadeh*, or prince, a native of a large island near which we sailed, called Sicilia. His principality, it seems, consisted in a cargo of merchandise which he was carrying to England for sale, and his history put

me in mind of what many of our Persian princes are likely to be at the death of our shah, namely, wanderers and adventurers over the face of the globe. He had little to denote high birth in his person, for he was, even among the Franks, a man of dark and sinister aspect, adopting a mode of disposing his hands in an odd and unseemly manner in his lower dress, which might be royal for aught we knew, but certainly neither graceful nor decent. He had a vizier in his suite, whom he hired perhaps to keep up his drooping spirits, who for the want of more serious employment played from morning to night upon a sort of guitar.

In this company we proceeded on our voyage. The ship was so large that it appeared to be divided into several *mahals*, or parishes, and we were consequently not thrown so much together as in the vessel which had brought us from Smirna. I scarcely ever associated with the ambassador, except at meals (for he permitted me to eat and to be seated before him), or when he walked upon the deck; therefore I cannot keep any particular register of his actions; but I, anxious to put into practice the shah's instructions, immediately began to study the English language, and to that effect made as many friends among the infidels as I could, in order to learn from them the names of every thing I saw. I found no one backward in giving me information, and ere long I began to make myself understood. The ambassador also was much helped in his study of it by every body on board; and one of the lieutenants, in particular, with whom he had formed an intimacy, made out a vocabulary of the most necessary words for

his use ; and thus our time was well taken up. Besides, he received much of his instruction from the moon-faced lady. She, wonderful to say, was as learned as any scribe, for she could read, and, what is more extraordinary, understood what she read.* She also wrote after the fashion of Europe ; but whether she excelled in that accomplishment we could not sufficiently judge, for being critics in our mode of penmanship only, we could not yet decide upon what might be good writing among the Franks. It was indeed a rare and curious sight to see this fair creature doing all the offices of a mollah, superintending the ambassador's fingers as he attempted to write, and making him read the ugly and crabbed letters common to the books of Europe. For my part, I never got over the habit of reading from right to left ; for so perversely awkward are the Europeans that every one of their books are written from left to right ; and the difficulty was daily renewed when I began to read, until I found it necessary to stick a pin into my left hand sleeve, as a memorandum. Mohamed Beg, who pondered deeply upon this subject, after a due consideration of such contradictory habits, came to a conclusion that all people who sit upon the ground, such as Persians, Turks, and Arabs, must write from right to left ; whereas all those who use tables, such as Europeans, must use the pen in the other direction.

I shall reserve myself to extend the remarks which my mind has already suggested on the dif-

* The Persians make a distinction between those who read and understand, and those who read and do not understand.

ferent usages of European life, as opposed to ours, until I have seen more of these extraordinary people ; but I cannot omit to mention, that one of the greatest difficulties we at first had to contend with was upon the score of eating. When it is remembered how simple are the manners of our board, where nothing is seen upon the cloth, save the food placed in various sized bowls and dishes, and spoons of different denominations for taking up the liquids, no one will be astonished when I say that we were quite puzzled at what we saw upon an English table. It absolutely bristled with instruments of offence. We saw knives, with long glittering blades of all sizes and descriptions, sufficient in number to have ornamented the girdles of the shah's household, as well as a variety of iron* claws, looking like instruments of torture for putting out eyes, or running into criminals' bodies. To these were added pincers, trowels, scoops, spoons of all shapes, and contrivances so numerous that it would take up a whole life to learn their use ; and for what purpose ? merely to transfer the food from the dish to one's mouth. It is to be imagined that we were very awkward when we first adopted this new mode of eating, we who had been accustomed from our childhood simply to take every thing up in our fingers, and carry it with comfort and security to our mouths, without the dangerous intervention of sharp instruments. The ambassador, however, determined from the beginning to persevere ; and so did I, in order not to have the daily mortification of being laughed at by the infi-

* The Persian word for a fork is *changal*, a claw.

dels, which they always seemed very ready to do whenever they discerned any thing in our habits of life that differed from theirs. Our first essays were rather disastrous, for my chief, in wielding his knife, had nearly cut off one of his fingers ; and I, forgetting the claw which I held in my hand, eating for a moment as usual with my fingers, almost put out my eye by running the horrid instrument into my face. Then there were ceremonies without end, of which we could not comprehend the necessity. It is proper etiquette that the food in the large dishes should first make a deviation from the straight line to one's mouth, by resting on certain smaller plates before each guest. Then it is not lawful to drink from the jug or bottle at once, but the liquor must first be poured into subsidiary glasses, while each sort of mess has its appropriate spoon. It is improper to eat butter with the spoon for soup, or to swallow the soup with a butter ladle. To take up a fowl whole in one's hand would be a mortal sin ; much more to offer a bit to one's neighbour, which with us is reckoned so high an honour. In short, to describe the novelties which came under our consideration at every moment would require more patience than so unworthy a servant of the Prophet as I possess ; therefore I resolved to let my remarks on this subject remain for the present at the bottom of my memory, in order to bring them forth, *Inshallah*, when fate should again restore us to our country and our homes.

CHAPTER XIII.

The embassy leave Malta, pass Gibraltar, and see England.—Hajji Baba describes some scenes on board ship.

THE morning after our departure from the Island of Dervishes, upon awaking and looking from the deck, what was our surprise to find the sea covered with ships of all sizes and denominations as far as the eye could reach ! They all seemed to be going the same way, as if impelled by one mind, although we could discover no visible mark in the heavens by which they could direct their course. The difficulty was explained when we found that the Franks had a *kebleh* as well as ourselves ; and that they were guided to it by means of an instrument, which, in some measure, answered the purposes of our *kebleh nemah*, by which, with the blessing of Allah, every true believer can find the straight road to Mecca.

Upon seeing these ships we thought at first that this might be a part of England ; and that the dominion of the sea, of which the infidels in Persia used to boast as belonging to them, might here be exemplified. But we were again mistaken ; for what was our surprise when we heard that they were laden with merchandise bound to England ; and that the great ship upon which we were embarked was intended to protect them on the voyage !

‘But,’ said the ambassador, when he heard this, ‘in the name of Ali, is there a famine in your land, that all these ships are going there? or are the English such dolts that they can make nothing for themselves, and that other nations are obliged to supply them? Why, if one ship arrives at Resht from Russia, or one at Abusheher from Hind, it is talked of throughout the land as an event; and they bring us as much cloth, china, sugar, coffee, indigo, and other merchandise as will suffice for many months.’ The mehmandar, instead of repining at the necessities of his country, which required such help in ships and merchandise, seemed, on the contrary, to glory in it; and endeavoured to persuade us that this was in fact the cause of its wealth and prosperity. We became more and more perplexed at all we saw, and our impatience to arrive at the seat of these extraordinary people increased every day.

In the meanwhile our time passed on in a manner, when we came to think upon it, that must have been under the influence of something more than human. Here we were, day after day, week after week, living in the middle of a world of water, going God knows where, and existing upon the mere assertion of one or two men, who had no other proof to show us that we should again see human beings, and once more enjoy the blessings of a life on earth, except a few figures, scratches, and marks on large sheets of paper. By these they pretended to explain that the world was round; that it was intersected by certain lines, all of which are known and numbered; and that, having passed a proper quantity of these, we should

infallibly find ourselves one morning in England. What was now to be done, but to put our faith in what they said? Their doctrine was more curious and astonishing than any we had ever heard from our most profound mollahs; and we determined that if their calculations proved correct, to publish it in our country, and pass for prophets and astrologers such as were never known since the days of Jemsheed.

After sailing many days and nights land was perceived, and we came to anchor close to a large insulated rock, which the English call Gibraltar, but which the m-hmandar assured us once belonged to the sons of Islam; and pointing out a long range of distant lands on the opposite coast, he told us that it was now inhabited by Mahomedans. Pressing him to tell us more on this subject, he said that one *Tarik ben Zeyad*, a famous devourer of iron,* a general of one of our early caliphs, had taken this place from the infidels of those days, and that it had been called *Gibel Tarik*, or *Tarik's Mount*, after him. We curled up our whiskers, and girded up our loins, upon hearing this history; and forthwith endeavoured to impress our friends on board with more extended ideas of the prowess of Mussulmans. Again we sailed, but we were long getting through a narrow passage owing to adverse winds; and recollecting the *Bibelmandab*,† of the sea leading to the Holy Mecca, we called this part of our voyage the entrance of the 'Gate of Tears.'

* *Ahunkhor*, a common expression, denoting a bravo, a hero.

† This word, vulgarly called *Babelmandel*, received its name of the Gate of Tears from the old Arabians, who considered as dead all those who ventured to encounter the dangers of its navigation.

Having passed it, we continued our course for many days in a colder climate, when a circumstance took place which inspired us with hopes that our voyage was now drawing to a close. The traveller and beast-stuffer, with whom we had become very intimate, was evidently distressed at the appearance of those unequivocal marks of age, namely, his white hairs. Upon comparing our beards with his head, he inquired by what contrivance, old and young, we managed to preserve such a fine glossy black on our hair; while, do all he could, he never could prevent his own becoming white. He made us understand that the world in general, taking his white hair as a false data, supposed him to be aged beyond the truth, while he assured us that he was still in the vigour of youth; and argued that if he could avert such injustice by using artificial means, he felt himself justified in so doing.

We assured him that in Persia we were equally sensible to the decays of age, and had an equal abhorrence of white hairs; and to that effect, from time immemorial, we had used certain dyes, which brought to the same level the beards of old men and of the young. Some preferred the *khenna* by itself, which produced a fine red or orange tint; others, more fastidious, the indigo leaf only, and appeared with blue beards; but the generality used both these dyes combined, which gave the fine black gloss. We then asked the traveller which he intended to use, the red, the blue, or the black?

He appeared to start with horror at the mention of red, swearing that he would prefer his own

white hairs to it; but he expressed his wish to make use of the black dye, and this was done apparently unknown to the rest of his countrymen in readiness to appear with all the colours of youth on reaching his own shores.

Hashem, the ambassador's valet, accordingly promised to prepare the proper dyes, and to renovate this infidel's head. But what was our astonishment the day after, instead of seeing him appear under new colours, to observe his head plastered over with grease, and thickly covered with the white dust common to Franks. We could remark that the khenna had taken well, and that but for the white dust and grease his head would have appeared of a fiery red. When we asked Hashem why he had not proceeded to finish with the indigo leaf, which would have made the whole black, we found that that drug had lost its quality by the damp of the sea; and that therefore the head of the bird-stuffer was doomed to remain a fixed red.

It was evident he was much mortified by this disaster, seeing that red hair is scouted as infamous in his country, and he appeared particularly so before the khanum, in whose eyes he evidently wished to hold a high station. But luckily for him, and for us all, the land of England was soon after in sight, and in this new and interesting object were forgotten the miseries of our fellow-traveller, and the ridicule of his crimson locks.

The infidels appeared to hail the first sight of their country with almost as much joy as we, and this confirmed us in the supposition that chance and destiny had much more to do in our stumbling

upon it, than all the observations, the lines, the angles, and the large pieces of paper of their astrologers. It was plain that their observations (and that was a discovery first made in great exultation by Mohamed Beg) did not wholly depend upon their knowledge of the heavenly bodies; for upon throwing a piece of lead into the sea, by means of a long line, they found that we were near the land, and having struck bottom, they knew by the sort of soil which attached itself to the lead that it must belong to England.

It is evident that much of what we had heard concerning the dark and dreary climate of England was true; for when its coast was first pointed out to us, instead of the bright and sunshiny mountains to which our eyes were accustomed in our own country, we here discovered only a low line skirting the horizon, enveloped by clouds and vapour; and this, we were assured, was the seat of the Franks. The reason then (that which always appeared to us so inexplicable) why this restless people should leave their own homes, and encounter so many dangers and difficulties to seek us out, was at once explained. We possessed a commodity which they did not, and without which the life of man is little worth. We saw the sun, and enjoyed sunshine; they were wise enough to know that this blessing outweighed every other. It is true the mehmandar endeavoured to explain it otherwise, by saying, that there existed among the nations of Europe interests of an extent and magnitude that we could not understand, which made it necessary for England, one of the principal of those nations, to send her emissaries into every

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quarter of the globe, however remote from her own immediate sphere, to make friendships, and extend her commerce.

We, however, would in no wise listen to these reasons, nor allow that any interests which the nations of the Franks might have among themselves could compete with those which agitated our vast, important, and ancient monarchies. 'As, for instance,' said the ambassador to him, 'if you talk of foreign relations, what will you compare to one of our *chappows*, or predatory excursions upon a neighbouring state? The men and women slaves, the camels, the horses, the mares, and the sheep, besides the mule-loads of heads, which we victoriously seize and bear away on such occasions, are feats indeed, and are not to be brought into competition with the squabbles of a few beardless infidels, who write, and negotiate, and talk, and make many words for months, and sometimes for years, about the right of a thing, before they come to blows.

'And if you talk of domestic concerns, what are the petty interests of individuals, who work only for themselves and their own enjoyments, to compare to the labours and exertions of a whole nation striving to accumulate luxuries and riches for a great king, such as ours, who, instead of thanking us for our trouble, esteems it a great honour that he does us to accept of our offerings, and of the homage of our lives and properties?'

It was in vain that we argued; nothing would convince the mehmandar that his country and his government were not the best in the world; and

he always finished by saying, 'Wait till you see England ; you will then judge with your own eyes ; and you will then tell me which are the happiest people, the English or the Persians.'

CHAPTER XIV.

They reach Plymouth.—Their first impressions upon seeing an English town.—Difference between an hotel and a caravanserai.

AT length our ship cast anchor ; no one inquired or seemed to care if it was a fortunate hour for so doing, but, without a moment's consideration, down went the anchor, and our destinies were fixed. But previous to this, even before we approached the shore, we held a conversation with the inhabitants by means of certain flags hoisted on our masts, which the captain assured the ambassador would in the course of a few hours announce to the king of England his arrival, although the seat of government from the port was distant at least as far as Tehran is from Ispahan. This contrivance we much admired, although we little understood how it could be put into practice, notwithstanding the assurances of Mohamed Beg, who argued that the English must have taken a hint from the Persians, for he brought to our recollection that part of our ancient history which relates to the downfall of the tyrant Zohak ;

that event having been brought about by fires on the tops of mountains, which were to be signals for a general rising of the people, and of his death. Be that as it may, we soon found the benefit of the invention; for instead of being obliged to remain on board for forty days, as we were threatened, ere two had elapsed the answer to our signals was received, and full permission granted us to land, and to proceed to the foot of the English throne.

This was a happy day for us indeed, and, without even thinking of asking permission of our astrologer, the ambassador at once determined to leave the ship. He ordered his suite to prepare for the journey, to collect the baggage, and not to forget the saddles, bridles, and horse equipages. We armed ourselves, and with pistols in our belts, swords by our sides, and each a spear or a carbine on our shoulder, we boldly descended the ship's side, and got into boats prepared for us. We took affectionate leave of our friends on board; for although their business was fighting, to give and to receive blows, yet peace and goodwill had marked their conduct towards us. The red-haired traveller slipped on shore under the ambassador's protection, and, accompanied by the young interpreter, who now had become our mehmandar, we at length pushed from the ship, while the air resounded with the cannon that was fired to announce that event.

The Circassian, who had not stirred from her corner since she had first come on board, escorted by Mahboob and Seid, went on shore in a separate boat after the ambassador's departure. During

the short time we had passed among the Europeans there was one difference between them and us which we remarked and wondered at. This was the respect and deference they paid to women. The golden-haired khanum who had been our fellow-passenger was idolized by them. She no sooner appeared than every one arose, and no one seemed to think of themselves or any thing else until she was seated in the most commodious and agreeable manner. Did she go on the deck, there was nothing done either by the officers or the men which had not her convenience in view. The same sort of attentions would have taken place towards Dilserîb, had she shown herself like the khanum; and even in her seclusion, no day passed but inquiries were made whether she had every thing she desired, whether her food was to her liking, and whether any thing else could be done to promote her happiness. These observations were confirmed by what took place during the short time we were on board previously to landing at Plymouth; for no sooner had the ship cast anchor, than women approached in boats, and were permitted to come on board. They were none of the most beautiful, 'tis true, nor the best bred, but still they were treated with proper decorum.

Saadi saith, 'the more fruit is forbidden, the more it is coveted;' and so we found it to be the case in the seclusion of the Circassian. The moment she appeared, although impenetrably veiled, the whole population of the ship was in readiness to look at her. It is well that the ambassador did not witness this scene, or else all his

wrath would have been excited; he who now thought himself representing royalty might perhaps have exacted the same honours towards his slave as the Asylum of the Universe does towards his women when they issue forth in public.* But I question whether such a ceremony as the *courouk* would have been understood by the infidels, to whom looking upon a woman's naked face is as common as looking upon any other piece of permitted flesh.

Our sensations upon rowing to the shore were such as we conceived the body of the true believer might feel when seeking for his soul finds it, and sits down to all eternity near a river of milk in the seventh heaven. Although every thing we saw, we were convinced, was impure, and defiled by the presence of mortals doomed to eternal fires, still how did our hearts open when we gazed upon green fields, fresh flowers, and running water! Indeed patches here and there were quite as green as the green of Persia. The numerous houses attracted all our attention, all painted and ornamented as if they had been prepared for the reception of the shah. We landed amidst an immense crowd quite as curious and as anxious to see us as the people of Iran had been to see the English embassy when it came into Persia. But there appeared to us a total want of police; no *ferashes* with sticks to keep the mob at a distance; not a blow was struck, not a foot turned up. Had the English been laughed at for having no beards

* Before the shah's harem leaves the palace a proclamation is made, ordering that no man appear on pain of death. This is called the *courouk*.

as much as we were for having them, there would have been no end to the stripes inflicted ; but not a thing was done either to control the looks or words of the infidels, and they laughed as much at their ease as if there was no retribution at hand.

The mehmandar had provided carriages to take us to the caravanserai ; a species of conveyance completely new ; for although we had seen the Turkish *arabaks* at Constantinople, yet they were nothing to compare to what we saw here. We were driven off at a rate that almost took away our breaths ; and before we could well ascertain into what sort of a machine we had been inserted, and how it was that we were carried away with such amazing velocity, we were landed at the door of the caravanserai.

When the mehmandar had talked to us of a caravanserai, we conceived that we should see a building open to every man and beast who might choose to walk in, and take possession of whatever room or stable that might be vacant, without being under any obligation, except to the pious founder of it. But what was our astonishment, when we alighted at the door of a house, at the gate of which stood several denominations of Franks, without their hats, and two or three women unveiled, all ready to receive us, and who, placing themselves in a sort of procession, preceded the ambassador until they reached a room fitted up with looking-glasses, and surrounded by many contrivances too numerous now to mention. The mehmandar then told us that this was to be our habitation for the present, and added, that whenever we wanted any thing, we had only to pull a

string pendant from the wall, when slaves ready to obey our orders would appear, quicker than even the *gins* did to Aladin.

All this bewildered our senses. Here we were in a house which no shah of Persia, since the days of Noushirvan, could have seen, not even in a dream—fitted up with more luxuries than decked our largest palaces—with windows glazed with the purest glass—with carpets of such little account, that every one walked over them in their shoes—with walls beautifully painted—with chairs enough to seat all the elders of Tehran; in short, with such inconvenient abundance, that it was long before we could be convinced to look upon it as the abode of the stranger. ‘Adieu,’ said we, ‘adieu, the vaunted hospitality of the East, if this is the way the stranger is received by the European!’ But what was still more extraordinary, we had remained in this state of surprise not a few minutes, when in came a fair-faced daughter of England, asking us through the mehmandar, whether we should like to ‘see our beds;’ at least so we understood her. We knew of no other beds than those which we carried about and spread on the floor, and therefore we all willingly pressed forwards to the sight; and heré our wonder was again excited. The shah’s throne, on which he sits to administer justice, and to make the two extremities of the world tremble, was not more magnificent than the bed intended for the ambassador. It must have been constructed upon the model of the famous peacock throne of the Moguls. Upon four pillars of curiously wrought wood was raised a canopy of rich stuffs, from

which were suspended curtains as ample as those which screen the great hall of Tehran. The seat was overlaid with the softest and most luxuriant mattresses, and pillows to recline upon were raised one above the other in heaps. Here our moonfaced conductress proposed that the ambassador should pass the night ; and the invitation, as may be expected, was greedily accepted ; an event to which she appeared perfectly accustomed, inasmuch as it was settled without the least indication of a smile or a blush on her part. 'Allah ! there is but one Allah !' exclaimed Mirza Firouz ; 'I am in a state of amazement. To eat dirt is one thing, but to eat it after this fashion is another. If pollution did not meet us in the face at every turn, I should say that our fortune is on the rise, and that our star is labouring hard in our service. We have not only the repose of paradise made ready for us, but also the houris thereof awaiting our pleasure.'

Of a sudden a great sensation appeared to be made in the caravanserai, and the ambassador was informed that the Circassian was arrived. The infidels, still treating her with the same attentions that we had remarked on board ship, were bringing her straight to Mirza Firouz, when they were prevented by the sagacity of Seid and Mahboob. Not one of them could understand that she was only a slave ; the mehmandar himself, when he reached England, seemed to take part with his own countrymen in paying her a respect that was not her due. 'Where shall we put the lady ?' said he to the ambassador.—'Lady, indeed !' said Mirza Firouz ; 'what words are these ? You

know better than I that she is no lady ; that she is only a poor slave ; and, therefore, for the love of Ali, do not allow her to be treated as a lady. Give her a corner, and there let her sit.'

The curiosity which she seemed to excite among the English was beyond any thing we could have conceived—it far exceeded their curiosity to see us ; for although nothing could be greater than the contrast between our hairy chins and their smooth faces, yet they seemed entirely to forget us in their desire to see her. They thronged the house from morning to night, watching the windows of the room which she was said to inhabit. Not satisfied with looking, they made strange noises in their language, which none of us could understand ; and, what was more extraordinary, there was a painter ready to draw her portrait the moment she should show herself. 'If slaves are thus treated in this country,' said we, 'what a happy lot must attend the wives !' Indeed, if to walk about without a eunuch, to leave their faces exposed to the gaze of men, and to be allowed the free use of their eyes and tongues, be happiness, the English women possess it in a supreme degree.

CHAPTER XV.

The ambassador is visited by the governor of Plymouth.—He dines, and goes to bed, but cannot sleep.

MIRZA FIROUZ was much mortified that no person, great or small, had been sent by the government to meet him at his landing. No one had said the *khosh amedeed*, 'you are welcome,' to him, which a Persian says even to a Jew when he has passed his threshold; much less had any one inquired whether his brains were in good order, or whether his spirits were well wound up. The *istakbal*, that commonest of ceremonies, which is always performed in Persia towards a stranger, was here totally omitted; and when we recollected with what honours and attentions all English ambassadors had been received by us, we unanimously exclaimed at the want of hospitality which marked our reception, and regretted our ever having left our own country. We fell tooth and nail upon the mehmandar, uttering loud complaints against his government; but he excused himself by saying, that the customs of England and Persia were different; and that he hoped, if we would have patience, we should soon find that what was omitted in empty words and compliments would be fully made up in substantial comfort.

However, we had not long been installed in the

caravanserai before the ambassador was waited upon by the governor of the city. He came unattended by any suite. He had no led horses, no running footmen before him, no pipe-bearers, no shoe-holders, no ferashes to clear the road with sticks; but he walked in with his hat in his hand, and, without in the least seeming to think what he was to sit, placed himself in the first chair that was at hand. The ambassador, who is all courtesy and politeness, and who understands perfectly how high up in the room every man is entitled to, was quite shocked at seeing the governor in a place only good enough for a *kedkhoda*,* and after much entreaty persuaded him to sit on the sofa next to him. Indeed, if the mehmandar had not told us that this was the governor, we should have taken him for little better than a *fakir*; and although we were assured that he was a commander of many ships, and a lion in the fight, yet he was so very small in person, and so very quiet in manner, that it required all our imagination to convince ourselves of his greatness. He was moreover seventy years old.

This being the first officer of consequence whom we had seen in England, the ambassador thought it right, for our interests, to produce as favourable an impression as possible on his mind, and accordingly put into practice all those attentions and well-set speeches of which he is so eminently the master. After he had inquired three times over whether his health was good, his brains right, and his spirits up, he turned round to me and the meh-

* A *kedkhoda* is the principal officer of a parish, or a village.

mehmandar, and said, 'Praise be to God, the governor is a fine youth; there is not his equal in the fight; he is all accomplished; he is a person, in short, upon whom one's eyes like to look. We are happy to have met with such an individual on our first landing; it forebodes good luck; our fortunes are on the rise; the king of England, it is evident, is a prince of great wisdom, to have chosen such a man for his representative. By being acquainted with such like persons, the friendship of the two countries will be cemented, and the Persians and English will henceforth call each other brothers.' The mehmandar having, as it appeared to us, in six words interpreted this, all that the ambassador got in answer was, 'Oh!' How what he had to say could have been thrown into so short a word, we have still to learn. The ambassador waited for some time for an answer to this speech, and was curling up his mustaches, and smoothing his beard, in the hopes of an equivalent return of compliment, when the governor broke a long silence by remarking that it was a fine day; not meaning, as we should have said in Persia, that the sun shone because of the joyful event of the ambassador's arrival, but that it really was fine, and did not rain. We all looked at each other, and as soon as he had taken his leave, and when the mehmandar had also left us, we gave full vent to our feelings. 'Did you ever see such an ass?' exclaimed one. 'A governor indeed! a Persian dog would make a better,' said another. 'Praise be to God,' said a third, 'where are the Franks, and where the Persians? A Persian camel-driver would speak better than this infidel.' Then we

all fell to praising the wit and the eloquence of our ambassador, who indeed had excelled himself on this occasion, considering the poor subject before whom he had made his first display. We said, of a truth the shah has chosen a man who will make his face white in this foreign land; and one who will give the infidels a proper specimen of Persia's superiority over every other. Our assurances in some measure soothed his displeasure at the treatment which he had hitherto received; and we consoled ourselves by the reflection, that it would be as unfair to judge of the whole of the Persian people by the Arab sheikh who governs Bushire, as it would be to judge of the English by the governor of Plymouth.

The dinner at the caravanserai was served up very much in the same fashion as it had been on board our ship; but our astonishment never ceased when we saw all the silver and rich ornaments that were displayed on our table. 'Can this be a caravanserai,' said we, 'or is this a deception practised upon us? We are lucky if at a caravanserai in Persia we find a poor wretch of a *baqal* at the gate, to sell us a loaf and an onion; but here are the riches of a *Hatem Tai*.' The meh-mandar assured us that it was a caravanserai, and nothing but a caravanserai; and at every town in England we should find, not only one, but several such as this, and in many instances much better, and more magnificent. However, there was one little secret which having explained, he materially diminished our satisfaction, and made us doubt after all whether our own ruined buildings were not better, and that was, that at the winding up,

and when on the point of departure, a certain little thing called a 'bill' was brought, in which every mouthful eaten, every candle expended, and every glass broken, were carefully registered; and that the amount was instantly paid, without even an appeal to the cazi, or a general cry of justice and no justice, or else the stranger's goods were seized, or perhaps his person put into prison.

Our time passed on rather slowly and dull enough until the hour of bed. We amused ourselves principally in pulling the strings which hung near the fire-place, to try whether such a ceremony would actually produce the appearance of the slaves, or servants, of the caravanserai; and sure enough they came, and tired enough they seemed to be; until at length our pulling had no farther effect; and the charm we supposed was broken by too frequent a repetition of it. But when we were fairly tired and sleepy, the round-faced maiden, whom we had seen in the morning, again made her appearance, with a lighted candle in her hand, and invited the ambassador to repose, to which he willingly assented. This was the signal for a general departure, and we each of us were then inserted into a well covered throne, as before described.

The night was passing on very successfully, when I was awoken by the ambassador's voice somewhere in the house. I got up as well as I could in the dark, and found him apparently in great distress, walking about in dishabille, followed by the master and mistress of the caravanserai and all their servants. The parties could not understand each other. The infidels were looking

quite aghast, wondering what the ambassador could mean; while he was venting his rage in a strange mixture of Persian and English words. As soon as he perceived me, he exclaimed, 'I'm dead, I'm dead; they have killed me! May their houses be bankrupt; may they all go to *Jehanum*!' Upon inquiry it was found that the people of the caravanserai, conceiving we must always be cold because we came from a hot climate, had so heaped the ambassador's bed with coverings, that no sooner had he got in among them than he began to smother. He escaped as if from certain death, and taking refuge in the passage, by his noise and exclamations gathered around him all the caravanserai. Having relieved his misery, we again retired to our beds; but our wonder never ceased when we saw how constantly and unconcernedly the infidel females mixed with the males, and with what little concern the men saw their wives and daughters waiting upon us, and performing all the offices which we can only command within our harems. On this occasion we discovered that there could be no distinction between men's and women's apartments in an English house, as there is in a Persian; for had that been the case, their inhabitants could not all have risen so much with one accord. The women certainly did not look as attractive as during the day, for their faces were encircled with small bits of paper, which we took for talismans placed there either to guard their beauty, to keep off the evil eye, or to charm away wrinkles and whiskers.

We were sadly off for our ablutions, for water was to be found in every place except where we

wanted it. In a small room into which we were shown, it was made to rush in and disappear as if by magic, in a much more extraordinary manner than through the pipes of our fountains. This attracted the notice of the idle *jelowdars* and stable-boys, and when they wanted something to amuse them and pass away the time, they found it in making the waters play in this place, to the great annoyance of the Franks. If contrivances so ingenious as this existed in Persia, instead of being confined to a small dark chamber, they would be placed before the shah in broad daylight, and the contriver clothed with a dress of honour. To say the truth, we frequently determined in our discussions with each other, that the English rendered complicated that which was intended by nature to be very simple.

CHAPTER XVI.

The ambassador proceeds on his journey.—Novelty of stage coaches to Persians.—Hajji Baba's remarks upon English travelling.

THE mehmandar now informed us that we were to make preparations for our journey to the capital. Our chief was somewhat startled at this, for he expected that some Frank of consequence would have been sent from the foot of the throne to conduct him to London; and that, waiting his

arrival, he might have had time to enjoy the sweets of repose after his long voyage. He also expected that an arrangement, similar to that made in our own country on the passage of an ambassador, or a stranger of consequence, would have been made here, whereby we should be much advantaged; for well did we recollect how the last English embassy, on its journey through Persia, had enriched themselves by the provisions collected from the towns and villages through which it passed. We also recollected how many of the faithful had been made to suffer out of compliment to the infidels; and we contemplated the enjoyment of retaliating on the feet of the English farmers some of the bastinadoes which had been inflicted on the Persian rayats. But all our dreams vanished when the mehn-andar told us, that on the next day, shortly after morning prayer, a coach was to conduct us to the foot of the throne. He warned us to be ready at a particular hour; for he assured us, that which we could scarcely believe, that such was the despotic nature of the men who drove these coaches, that they would not wait any man's pleasure, not even for their own shah, did he happen to require the delay of an hour or two. And the fact proved his words true, for on the following morning, when we had scarcely done combing our beards, and before we had settled the direction of the *kebleh*, preparatory to our prayers, we were alarmed by the appearance of the mehmandar, who, in the greatest haste, ordered us to hurry to the coach, for not a moment was to be lost. 'But what is the haste,' rejoined I, 'in the name of the blessed Hussein?

Have we not all the day before us? The sun is not so hot here as in our country, requiring us to leave our resting-place so early!—‘We have nothing to do with the heat of the sun,’ answered the mehmandar; ‘time is not thrown away here; every minute is of consequence.’—‘But who throws away time?’ exclaimed Mohamed Beg, still on his knees, and repeating his ‘God forgive me,’ between his lips. ‘Is it throwing away time to say one’s prayers? Our blessed Mahomed—’ ‘Man!’ exclaimed the mehmandar, ‘what does the coachman care for your blessed Mahomed?’ Of a sudden the sound of a horn was heard, like that used at our hot baths to call the women to bathe, and this, we were informed, was the last stage of the coachman’s impatience. This was succeeded by the voice of the ambassador himself, who roared out, ‘Ah ye unsainted men! Ah ye children of burned fathers! why do ye delay? Do ye not perceive that the Franks are waiting? Arm yourselves and be mounted.’ Upon which, without saying a word more, we girded our loins, put on our swords, thrust our pistols into our waists, tied on our cartouche boxes, seized our long carabines, and putting our proper leg foremost on crossing the threshold, saying the *bismillah*, we left the caravanserai, and sallied into the street.

Our chief called to me, and said that I was to proceed with him; that Seid, Mahboob, and the Circassian were to do the same; but enjoined me to see the others off without delay. The mehmandar, having inserted four into the inside of the coach, was proceeding to put in a fifth, when

he was stopped by loud cries. 'In the name of Ali, by the soul of your father, there is no more room; we shall die.' The more the mehmandar entreated, the more they showed resistance. They had seated themselves most agreeably on their heels, after our fashion, and every corner was occupied. At length, by main force, the mehmandar threw in a Frank who was to accompany them to London, shut the door upon them, hoisted Hassau the cook, and Feridoon, the barber, on the top of all, and, before we could say 'God be with you,' they set off like an arrow shot out of a bow. I had never seen any thing so wonderful since I was born. Hassau and Feridoon both, in the face of all mankind, were each of them seated by an unveiled daughter of the Franks, who little seemed to care for the actual touch of men acknowledging a different faith to their own.

The most extraordinary feature of the character of the English is, that they seem to look upon nothing as impure. They will touch a Jew as soon as one of their own tribe, and require no extraordinary ablution after it. But nothing in fact ought to surprise on that head, when we reflect that the unclean beast is cherished and eaten by the kings, lords, and commons of all the different nations of Frangistan.

The ambassador followed in an hour after, accompanied by the mehmandar and myself in one carriage, and by the Circassian and her two attendants in another. I never enjoyed any thing so much as this mode of conveyance. In this the English certainly are superior to the Persians; for although our *takhteravan* is very agreeable in

its way, yet nothing can exceed the ease and convenience of the carriage. In the *takhteravan*, when the mules take to trotting, or when the one proceeds willingly and the other refuses to go except by beating, the sufferer in the cage between both undergoes strange motions; but in the carriage all is agreeable. It is so easy a motion that one might go through one's prayers in it, smoke one's *kalioum*, or eat one's dinner. We at first found it attended with the great inconvenience of want of air. By certain pulleys glasses are drawn up; but not being able to put them down again, we were nearly stifled until an infidel showed us the secret of the contrivance. I question whether carriages would ever become of general use in Persia; for, after all, what is there like the horse for the conveyance of man? It is the universal use of this animal that makes the Persian what he is, namely, active and enterprising; while the Frank, carried about in his carriage, takes the place which our women would occupy, and debases his manhood seated on soft cushions, sheltered from heat and cold, instead of bestriding a hard saddle, exposed to and hardened by the vicissitudes of weather.

We travelled through a country, the whole of which was better watered and kept than either the gardens of the Takht Kajar at Tehran, or the eight paradises of Ispahan. Not a stone was to be seen on the road. We supposed that the *gins* and *peris* kept it clean; for, excepting when the shah makes his entry into one of our cities, when the people are turned out to heap up the highway at his approach, we had never seen any thing so

well prepared. We frequently asked each other whether this had been done by way of preparation for the ambassador's arrival; but the mehmandar assured us that it was the same all over England; and at length we believed it, particularly when we remarked that our passage through the country created no greater sensation than if a string of camels were crossing the desert; and that if people did look at us, instead of bowing the head to the earth, as we had been ordered to do to the English embassy in Persia, they only laughed and pointed the finger.

We travelled all the first day, and rested at night in a caravanserai, superior to the one at Plymouth. What was our surprise to find that we had proceeded above thirty parasangs; a distance which, in our country, would have taken us three or four days to perform! Here was neither loading nor unloading of mules, no sore backs of horses to complain of, no *yakhdans*, no pots and pans, no cookery to perform, no cook to carry; all seemed prepared at a moment's notice, as if the shah himself had been expected; as if the country had been laid under contribution months beforehand. We were agreed, that had Ismael Beg Telai, the Golden Ismael as he is called, the shah's favourite, had he, provided with the most absolute firman that was ever issued, been sent in advance to Ispahan, the most abundant city in Persia, to accumulate provisions, and to prepare for the arrival of the king of kings, he never could have performed what he saw done with the most extraordinary ease, unexpected as we evidently were, in our passage through Eng-

land. The moment our carriages appeared, as if they had had prophets and star-gazers among them to warn them of our arrival, every body was in motion to be of use to us. They all appeared to know as well as ourselves what we wanted, and every thing was done without our speaking a word. Who has ever seen a caravan depart in Persia, or even a string of mules loaded, without a thousand uplifted voices being heard in universal wrangle ; 'justice !' 'no justice !' being banded from mouth to mouth, as quick as blows falling on the *felek* ? But here, as Ali is my witness, not a word was spoken ; the horses appeared to run of their own accord to the carriages, ready and anxious to be harnessed. The drivers were all dressed, whip in hand, and before I could have counted my beads we were on the road again. And when we reached the caravanserai, instead of witnessing, as we frequently do in Persia, a general battle between servants and masters, cooks and mule-drivers, where each one is to pass the night, some seizing upon one room, some upon another ; here, on the contrary, the most astonishing order prevailed. Each new comer is paraded in procession to an apartment, which is as much his own as if he had resided in it twenty years, where he finds a fire provided for him, and where strings, ready for his pulling, ring corresponding bells, and produce corresponding waiters ; and where the more noise he makes, the more trouble he creates, the more the owners of the caravanserai appear to be pleased. When a dinner is ordered, it is wonderful to observe what alacrity and stir are created throughout the house ; while we in Persia,

after a long day's march, are happier to get our *pillau* without the previous necessity of beating our cook. But, at the same time, I must observe, as sure as night succeeds the day, never did we touch a morsel—never did we go to the right or to the left—never did we leave the caravanserai, without that inevitable consequence of all things in England, to wit, a bill.

CHAPTER XVII.

They reach Bath, and approach the capital.—Hajji Baba describes the sensations of the ambassador at an English reception.

THE next day we travelled as many parasangs as the day before, with the same ease and comfort; passing several large towns, and seeing sights so strange and novel, that it would require the pens of all the mirzas in the shah's gate to record them. We stopt at one city, in particular, to see what appears to be very uncommon among the Franks, namely, a bath. The city itself is called *Hummum*, or Bath; and strange enough it appeared to us, that so much consequence should be made of that which no Persian village is without; which exists in almost every street in our cities, and which is the necessary appurtenance of every Persian gentleman's house. But the secret of the consequence given to this place was, that the

waters here, like those of Broussa, near Stamboul, are medicinal; and we were highly amused at the contrivances put into practice to restore the sufferers to health. The ambassador complained of a pain in his shoulder, and the Frank who showed us the establishment drew out a brush made of the bristles of the unclean beast, which he assured us would, if well rubbed over the part, produce instant relief. We recoiled from the sight of this instrument as if we had seen a snake. The infidel then invited us to walk into a pool where many Franks, both men and women, were taking their pleasure; but we had had pollution enough for once by the sight of the brush, and positively refused to accede to his entreaties.

The sight of the baths led to an animated dispute with the mehmandar, upon the subject of cleanliness. We asserted that the Persians were the cleanest people on earth, and the Franks necessarily the dirtiest. I said, 'You, English, for instance, scarcely ever use a bath. You wash your hands and face, and then think yourselves clean; whereas the commonest man in Persia never passes a week, and the man of any consequence scarcely a day, without washing their whole persons.'

'That may be the case,' said the mehmandar, 'but the cleanliness exists only as long as you are in the water; the moment you are out of it you return to your shirts worn for weeks before; to your trowsers, which pass from father to son; and to your sheepskin cloaks, that go through whole generations. We change our linen daily; the poor-

est man is clean from head to foot once in the week at least.'

'What is the use of his cleanliness in dress,' said I. 'when he defiles his inside by eating swine's flesh? By the blessed Mahomed! twenty years of double prayers, when we return to Persia, will not purify us from the contaminations we are likely to catch during our stay among you.'

'Do not throw away your words in premature talk,' said he; 'you will eat swine's flesh, without scruple, believe me, before you have done with us.'

He almost made me sick with the very thought of such abomination; and being once more installed in our carriages, we continued our road towards the foot of the English throne.

Upon arriving at our resting-place at night, the ambassador was met by two mirzas, from the gate of the English shah, with carriages, and two royal *chappers*, or couriers, who were ordered to prepare every thing for his accommodation; and accordingly they had spread a table with all sorts of meats, fruits, and sherbets, to which they invited us to sit the moment the ambassador had alighted from his carriage. We saw that this dawn of attention from the king of the country was pleasing to the ambassador; and we anticipated the *Istakbal* that would meet us the next morning; for we were informed that we were only ten parasangs from the city, and that we should certainly enter it before the *muezzins* could call the noon-day prayer. This put us all into good humour. The ambassador consulted with Seid what *caba* he should wear on the occasion, what shawl he should wind round his cap, and ordered his dia-

mond-hilted dagger to be got in readiness. I had remarked on many occasions that our dark faces and black eyes were not displeasing to the fair daughters of England ; and therefore I merely put on a clean shirt, which I had also remarked was a great passport to an Englishman's approbation. I tightened my waist, whilst I expanded my shoulders to their fullest extent by putting on my broad sleeved *tekneh*. We all took care to curl the *zulf*s behind our ears. Seid shaved the ambassador's head ; I left mine unshorn till we should meet Feridoon the barber. The Circassian was veiled closer than ever ; and although we had no astrologer with us to ascertain a fortunate hour for entering the city, yet as the ambassador had had a good omen the evening before, we were satisfied that our good fortune was on the ascent.

We entered the carriages prepared for us with considerable emotion, considering what an important event entering a city under our circumstances must always be, and fully prepared to do justice to the dignity of our shah by the manner in which it was the ambassador's intention to receive the *Istakbal*, which we made no doubt was preparing to receive him. The mirzas accompanied the ambassador in the same carriage, and we remarked to them in what a different manner Persians approach a city, on occasions of ceremony, to what appeared to be usual here. It was the custom among us, we assured them, to move very slow ; much ceremony, and many complimentary speeches were made ; we smoked on the road ; our *shatirs*, or running footmen, preceded our horses, and, on the entrance of an ambassador,

the stick was abundantly administered to the crowd, in order to call forth admiration at the vigilance of the police, and to show the king's authority. Sometimes, when terror was to be struck, the city gates were ornamented by ample portions of human bodies, and heads were laid in heaps before the royal palace. But here we remarked that it was exactly the contrary. The infidels who were driving our carriages galloped their horses more like cavalry making a charge against an enemy, than like men conducting the representative of the shadow of Allah upon earth.

As we approached the city we remarked that, in many parts, the walls were painted in white characters, evidently after the manner of our country, and no doubt for the same holy purposes. I copied several such inscriptions, and hoarded them up with much care, to introduce them in my speech, when I should be able to express myself with sufficient ease in English.*

We were now told that we were only about three parasangs from the foot of the throne; and in proportion as that distance diminished, the stir on the road increased. It appeared, from the immense number of people who were whirling by in coaches, and conveyances of every description, that the population of the city must have been apprised of our approach; for well did I recollect, on the day that the last embassy from the shah of England reached Ispahan, when all its inhabitants

* The words *ya ali! hou! hak! ya allah!* are frequently painted on the walls of the Persian mosques, and even houses. What Hajji Baba remarked here must evidently allude to the competitors in blacking, and to the pertinacious Eady.

were ordered out to meet it, that some of the most curious were to be seen at the head of the great mass even before the entrance of the *hezzar dereh*, or the thousand acres. But still it was extraordinary that no proper notice was taken of us; for if perchance we were discovered in our rapid course, it was only to point, or to laugh, or to hoot at us. We strained all our eyes in the direction upon which we were proceeding, when, under a thick yellow vapour, we saw what was evidently an immense city; and now the ambassador began to look about him for the grand deputation. We perceived no troops, nor any horse-men running to and fro with anxious looks. The two British mirzas sat unmoved; but the mehmandar, who, from having seen our country, guessed what was passing in the ambassador's mind, said that he hoped we should now soon come to an end of our journey; and that then the ambassador would be convinced of the desire of the English nation to make his stay happy.

‘And is it the custom of your country,’ exclaimed Mirza Firouz, ‘to smuggle an ambassador into the seat of your government, as if he were a bale of prohibited goods?’

The principal mirza, through the mehmandar, then assured the ambassador that it was not an English custom to send deputations on the road; but that he would not fail to receive all the attentions due to his high rank, as soon as he had reached the house which had been prepared for him.

‘If such be your custom,’ said our chief, ‘by the head of the shah, believe me, it is a bad cus-

tom. Go to Persia—learn manners there. The ceremony of *Istakbals* is as old as Jemshedd. After all, there is some difference between the entry of an ambassador and that of an old woman, although they must be the same in your estimation, since the one seems to produce as little sensation as the other.' Then turning to me, he said, 'Hajji, by my soul, if I had known, when I received my dismissal from the shah's presence, that I was to travel all this way, to encounter the waves and storms of the sea, to live with infidels, to be rubbed with a swine's brush, in short, to devour more abomination than ever fell to the lot of any one true believer, I would rather have shaved my beard, and lived in a corner all my life with ashes on my head. Ah! Mirza Sheffi! Mirza Sheffi!' exclaimed he; 'you old unsainted vizier! this is all your doing. If I do not defile your grave, and that of the whole of your ancestry, before I die, then my name is not Mirza Firouz.'

The two English mirzas sat mute with astonishment at the volubility which all at once possessed the ambassador's tongue. They mildly pointed to a beautiful garden, through which we were driving, saying, 'this is one of our public walks, and one of our places of amusement.'

'Shut up the windows,' roared Mirza Firouz; 'nobody shall see me so disgraced. I, who am ordered to make the shah's face white in this foreign land—I, who am the first ambassador whom the shah has ever despatched hither, to be treated with as little ceremony as an ass-load of old rags would be in Persia! It is a disgrace not to be borne.'

We continued to whirl along with unequalled rapidity, and, with the glasses up, we streamed from every pore. Nothing was to be done but to sit quiet. The mirzas and the mehmandar talked earnestly to each other. The mehmandar endeavoured all he could to explain away what so much grieved the ambassador; but all conversation was at an end by the new sort of noise which the carriage made upon entering the body of the city. We caught only rapid glimpses of streets, houses, shops, and novelties too numerous to be described at this moment, and at length stopped at a door; situated between several other doors of exactly the same dimensions; and there, to our joy and amazement, we beheld our countrymen, whom three days before we left at Plymouth, and whom, to say the truth, we expected never to see again.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of the Persians in London.—They mistake a lord for a doctor.—Of the house in which they are installed.

THE ambassador got out of the carriage, with his temper all crooked, totally ignorant whether in so doing the hour was fortunate or unfortunate. Nobody appeared before him to say, 'you are welcome;' no one with a present in his hand to

greet him; not even a pomegranate was offered him; and rushing up a rapid flight of stairs, he threw himself in despair upon a sofa. In vain was he invited to partake of a magnificent repast of sweetmeats, fruits, and ices, which had been prepared, and which the English mirzas and the mehmandar assured him had been provided at the express orders of the government—nothing would console him—he swore his face was black, and black he swore it should remain.

The mehmandar then presented him some food in a dish, and asked whether he would not eat.

‘Eat!’ said the ambassador; ‘if all your receptions are like this, and if you think to wipe off the disgrace which my shah has this day received by giving me to eat, you are much mistaken. Let me see some one to say ‘welcome’ on the part of your shah, and then, perhaps, I may eat. No salt will be lawful till then.’

‘But do you count the British mirzas for nothing?’ said the mehmandar.

‘Mirzas, indeed!’ exclaimed he in a fury; ‘did we send a writer of firmans, and a clipper of paper to your ambassadors? What words are these? Don’t beat the air with more useless words! My face is black; your face is black; and your government’s face will also be blackened (praise be to God!) throughout the world when this fact is known!’

Seeing that nothing could be made of him in this humour, we left him to roll on the sofa, whilst Seid rubbed his feet, and Feridoon, the barber, kneaded his back and loins, which produced relief more effectual than either speeches from the mirzas or the mehmandar.

I consoled myself for the miseries of the last hour by seeking the company of my countrymen. I found them settled near the entrance of the house, in a large room, supported at one end by two pillars, surrounded with chairs, and encumbered by a large wooden case mounted on four legs. Here they had spread their carpets, arranged their saddles and trunks; hung up their carbines, swords, and pistols; and had made all the arrangements usual in a caravanserai. There was no end to the many strange things which we had to say to each other. They had travelled through the country in a style worthy of kings, for their carriage was provided with every convenience; horses ready harnessed at frequent intervals were awaiting their arrival to carry them on with increased rapidity; and they had not once had recourse to either sword or carbine, such little impediment had they found. 'Tis true they were obliged to proceed whether they would or not; for the inexorable driver would not give them time even to prepare a *kalioun*; but they found so much pleasure in being as it were masters, whilst every body seemed slaving and toiling for their advantage, that, to hear them talk, they would not have cared if the journey had never come to a close. On arriving at the house in London, they were at a loss, amidst the variety of rooms which it contained, where to deposit themselves; but knowing from experience how much more convenient and safer it was to keep together, and to sleep under each other's protection, they settled to remain where I found them, rather than to take separate beds and separate

rooms at the top of the house. They were visited every morning by a good old infidel, a doctor, so they thought, who had been very kind to the cook, who felt unwell from the fatigue of the journey. He had generously felt his pulse, and had sent his deputy to give the proper medicines. We were expressing our admiration of Frank doctors, when, at this very moment, the said old man came in, accompanied by the mehmandar. We all rushed to have our pulses felt, and our tongues looked at, which is the Frank mode of ascertaining health, when the mehmandar, to our astonishment, burst into a fit of laughter.

‘What news is this?’ said he. ‘What do you do thus for?’

‘He is our doctor, praise be to God!’ said the cook; ‘he has cured the pain in my heart.’

‘Doctor!’ exclaimed the Frank; ‘he is no doctor—he is my uncle!’

‘Well,’ said I, ‘and suppose he is? he may be a doctor, and your uncle too; there is no harm in that, is there?’

‘But he is one of the *omrahs*, a lord, and a man of the sword; he never made up a drug in his life.’

‘How should we know that?’ said the cook; ‘how are we to distinguish between your lords and your doctors?’

This puzzled the mehmandar; for truly every body seemed to be on an equality in this strange country. To judge of people by their dress here was impossible. Finery certainly was not the criterion; for if it were, then those who drove the coaches in the streets, and those who stood behind them, must be the nobility of the land, for

they were the finest drest people we saw. We found, when we came to draw inferences from all that met our eye, that our difficulties increased; and therefore, until our senses should have become more expanded, we thought the best plan for the present was to seat ourselves upon the hill of patience, and open the eyes of astonishment upon the prospect of novelty.

In the meanwhile, accompanied by the meharmandar, I made a survey of the house that had been allotted to us by the English shah. It must have recently been taken by force from some native khan; for we could scarcely suppose that any body would willingly have surrendered up the immense property, which we remarked that it contained, to strangers. The old lord high treasurer, who was obliged to give up his house to the last Frank embassy at Tehran, managed his matters better, for he took away all his magnificent carpets and *nummuds*, all his silken door-curtains, all his China bowls and silver candlesticks, and substituted for them old worn-out articles, which answered the purpose just as well. But here there was no end to the magnificence displayed. Larger mirrors than any that had ever yet reached Persia were placed against the walls. Chandeliers equal to the shah's in his palace of Negaristan; carpets, sofas, chairs, beds, every necessary of life in use among Franks, were seen, of all sizes and denominations; things of which we could not discover the use, and things of which, when we were told the use, appeared useless. For instance, we found chairs of all fashions: some to keep one's legs up; some to let them down;

some to loll with the right arm ; some with the left ; others to support the head. Now, this to us, who have only one mode of sitting, namely, upon our heels, appeared an excess of madness. Then there was one set of tables to dine upon, another set for writing, others again for washing and shaving. But where should I end were I to attempt description ? The same difficulties existed about the rooms. The room in which the servants had established themselves was one appropriated for eating. To eat any where else is improper—to sleep there would be sacrilege—to make a bath of it would create a rebellion. Then above this were several large apartments, with couches placed in various corners, where the whole of us might have slept most conveniently ; but these we were informed were the Franks' *dewan khaneh*, where the masters received their visitors. One thing was most certain. They have no *anderoon*, no separate apartments for their women. Men and women all live together ; a man's room may be next to a woman's, and no difficulty made about it. How things could go on in this manner it was still left to us to discover ; and the ambassador was at some loss to know where to deposite the Circassian, until we found a very good apartment, separate from the rest, where she might live unseen, and unable to see ; happy in the enjoyment of her own customs. The universal exposure of their faces to the gaze of man by the infidel women, was still to us a matter of the greatest surprise. Occasionally we remarked women wearing a sort of apology for a veil, green, black, or white, but it was merely a screen from wind, dust, or sun ;

but never was the impure eye of man ever taken into consideration. However, as upon this subject, as well as upon the relative situation of the sexes in this infidel, swine-eating country, I shall have much to relate and much to expose, I will restrict myself at present to say, that during the whole day, the day of our first arrival, we did nothing but inspect the curiosities of our residence. Our constant progress from the top to the bottom, in which there were more steps than would take a man to the highest minar in Ispahan, at length so fatigued us, that we concluded, in order to encounter such fatigue we ought to abandon our high-heeled green slippers, shod with iron, which slipped off frequently in the descent, and adopt the flat-soled shoes of the Franks. Well did we recollect the conveniences of our own houses in Persia, when compared to the one we now inhabited. There we scarcely ever had to mount a step; it was all even ground. On the same surface was the harem, with its fifty rooms, and its intricate passages; the vast *dewan khaneh*, with its open front ready to catch the smallest breeze that blew; the broad court, planted with trees, ornamented by flowers, and refreshed by splashing fountains. Here, on the contrary, every thing was upside down. If we wanted to cook our meat, we descended to the bowels of the earth; if it were necessary to eat it, we went to its surface. If to sit and rest, we were perched midway; and if to sleep, we clambered into the chambers of the air. Mohamed Beg, the Locman of our party, who was constantly endeavouring to acquire good reasons for what we saw, was of opinion,

that England being an island, it was necessary to save ground ; for if all her houses, as in Persia, were spread over the surface of her territory, she would form one vast city, and no room would be left for agriculture. But Persia being a country the limits of which were unknown, it signified little how much of her surface was covered by buildings ; there would always be plenty to spare. And this remark, he argued, was confirmed by the well known circumstance, that every man in Persia thought it incumbent upon him to build a new house for himself, and leave the house of his father to fall into ruin ; whereas in England the son came into possession of his father's house, and felt himself bound to keep it in repair ; as naturally as in Persia the son becomes the owner of his father's fur coat, and the daughter of her mother's state trowsers, feeling themselves bound to cherish and preserve them.

CHAPTER XIX.

Of how they pass the first night in London.—English noises different from Persian.—An English vizier visits the ambassador.

WE passed the first night very ill. Each of us had a bed, the curtains of which were so pretty that we longed to cut them up for *alcoloks**, or to bind them round our waist; but we were unaccustomed to their heavy coverings, and found, after we had been a short time under them, that our coat and trowsers became disagreeably oppressive. We all agreed that certain white pieces of loose linen, which accompanied each bed, would make excellent shirts; and Taki, the ferash, who had only one, determined immediately to improve his stock. The whole household was on the stir long before the Franks thought of moving; but Mohamed Beg was much puzzled about the true hour for saying his morning prayer, for we heard no *muezzins* to announce it from the mosques; and besides, the nights were so much longer than any we had been accustomed to, that we had almost settled among ourselves that the sun never rose in this ill-conditioned city. We had walked about the house for several hours almost in total darkness, and were in despair waiting for the dawn, when at length we

*The under vest, usually made of flowered chintz.

heard noises in the street, indicating that the inhabitants were awake. During the whole night at intervals we had watched the cries of what were evidently guards of the night, who, like the *keshekchis* on the walls of the *Ark*,* announce that all is right; but those we now heard were quite different. At first we thought they might be muezzins appointed to cry out the Frank *azan*, the invitation to the inhabitants to arise and pray; and indeed, looking at them through the twilight, we were confirmed in our idea, for they were dressed in black, as all the English men of God are; but we were evidently mistaken, because, although they uttered their cry in a variety of loud shrill tones, yet still no one seemed to rise a moment the sooner, or to have the least idea of praying on their account. And still we were uncertain, for when the day had completely broken, Mohan-ed Beg came running in in great joy, exclaiming, '*Muezzin! muezzin!*' and pointing to the top of one of the minars which are seen on all the houses, we there saw one of these street clergymen, crying out his profession of faith with all his might.

As the day advanced, strange noises, such as we never hear in our cities, became audible. Among others we distinguished a bell, whose sound, similar to that sometimes heard from the churches of the Armenians at Julfa and Etchmiazin, made us again suppose that this might be the true mode of calling the Franks to their devotions; but it appeared to be the signal for a general cleaning of houses and house doors. This operation was the

*The king of Persia's palace is so called.

business of women ; and we imagined that it must have something to do with their religion, for they performed it as an act of penance on their knees. And we found too that our own house was undergoing the same ceremony ; for, to our astonishment, we discovered that women, provided no doubt by the government for our use, had slept under the same roof with us, and were doing that which is the business of our *jerashes*, or carpet-spreaders.

The ambassador having been refreshed by the help of his barber, arose in better humour, and announced to us that he had had a dream, which having been advantageously interpreted by Mohamed Beg, his spirits were wound up, and he devoured no more grief. He had seen Mirza Sheffi with his feet in the air, his back on a carpet, and four *jerashes* flourishing their sticks over him, whilst the Asylum of the Universe was eating a *pillau* of gold instead of rice ; and this was so sure an indication of the speedy destruction of his enemy, that he had now nothing left to wish for. His good humour was increased by the arrival of a Frank of consequence, who was announced to him as the mehmandar appointed to attend him, during his stay in England, by the English shah, and who talked our language with so much facility and purity, that every thing seemed now to promise fair for making progress in the object of our mission. He not only spoke Persian, but he wrote it with as much elegance as of our best *moonshis* ; he had read all our best authors ; had Hafiz and Saadi at his fingers' ends ; and, to say the truth, we soon found out that the ambassador would have been happy had he not

been quite so learned, since he was every now and then obliged to chew the cud of shame, and swallow the bitter draught of ignorance.

The mehmandar announced to the ambassador, that it was the intention of the king of England's vizier for foreign affairs to call upon him on that day; and that the *vizier azem*, or the prime minister, would visit him on the next. This surprised us exceedingly. 'What!' said we, 'is all the visiting to be settled without one single quarrel? These Franks must have a poor idea of their own dignity, of what is due to their shah, if they concede at once that which generally forms one of the principal questions of our negotiations.—When the last English embassy reached Tehran, a good month elapsed ere it was settled who should take the first step from off his *nummud*, the Frank or the Irani; and it was only after a laborious compromise that they at last met at a third person's on neutral ground. Here viziers drop into our mouths without our scarcely giving ourselves the trouble to open them.' After all, we concluded, we were Persians, and that was saying every thing. Who can deny a Persian's precedence?

The vizier came at the appointed time. He was attended by only two persons, who freely sat before him without asking his leave. 'What a difference,' said we, 'between one of our shah's viziers and this personage!'

'*Bah! bah! bah!*' said I, 'a vizier is somebody in our blessed Persia! See him, when he leaves the gate of his house, surrounded by a hundred servants and dependants; some watching the least turn.

of his head to catch a glimpse of his eye ; others running at the side of his stirrup in officious haste to kiss his knee ; others, again, claiming the protection of his skirt to present a petition. Then if a poor wretch happens to obstruct the road as he is about to pass, how lustily the ferashes beat him ! how his camels are hustled away, or his mules, packs, and all, thrust into the kennel !' Hitherto we had seen nothing in the men of office in England which could make their places at all desirable ; and what was our astonishment when we were told that the individual who now visited the ambassador was no less a personage than the vanquisher of the famous Tippoo Sultaun, the captor of the splendid city of Seringapatam ; one whose power had been greater than that of all the Mogul chiefs put together ; one who could make the sun rise by a twinkle of his eye, and annihilate the moon by a shake of his head. And here he was, with white dust on his head, seated on a chair instead of a throne, paying a first visit to one less than one of our shah's shoe-bearers, when he himself had had shahs and nawabs waiting to kiss the dust of his feet. 'Strange vicissitude !' exclaimed Mohamed Beg ; 'this it is which Saadi meant, when he said, that the life of man is like the traveller in the mountains of Kaf. If at the summit, he receives the rays of light before any other mortal ; if half way down, he is partly obscured ; if at the bottom of the valley, all the world look down upon him.' It was evident from the dignified expression of his eye, which caused us ever after to call him the 'eye of the state,'* and from

* A title frequently given to viziers.

the easy flow of his language, that he was not only a son of words,* but one who could rule kingdoms; one, in fact, who understood the difference between right and wrong, whether he governed Christians or Hindoos.

The ambassador expressed his desire to the English vizier to be immediately admitted to the presence of the shah of England, in order to present the letter and the presents with which he was charged; and notified to him that the king of kings had ordered him, upon pain of losing his head, to receive his audience in less than three days after his arrival.

The vizier assured the ambassador that every thing should be done to meet his wishes, as far as was consistent with the customs of England; but that as the king, his master, was only to be seen at stated times, he was fearful that some little delay must arise before the audience could take place.

Mirza Firouz seemed surprised at this, and explained, that the shah of Persia made himself daily visible to his subjects; that before the noon-day prayer the selam took place, when his majesty being seated on his throne, the great officers of the court stood before him, as well as all others whose duty led them to seek the royal presence; and that an ambassador might have an audience on the very day of his arrival if he chose it, provided the stars and the astrologers were propitious.

The English vizier then said, he was afraid that he must apologize for the incivility of the English stars, since they would necessarily oppose them-

* Eloquent.

selves to the ambassador's wishes on this occasion, and keep him longer from the presence of the king than was agreeable to him, but that as soon as possible he should have his audience.

This intelligence threw dismay into the ambassador's heart; and as soon as the vizier had taken his leave, he broke out into the following exclamations: '*Wahi! wahi!* what misfortune has fallen upon my head! If this is to be the case, my soul is at an end; I shall be disgraced before men, and my wife and child will be sold to the Turcomans! That old flint-hearted Mirza Sheffi will then have got me into his possession; he will defile my father's grave, and prevail against my mother.' Then addressing himself to us, he continued: 'Ay, *Batchah!* say, children, what shall we do? where shall we go? Our faces will be black! Our king is a despotic king; and he takes no more account of men's heads than a mule does of the thistles it devours.' I ventured to allay his apprehension by saying, 'The truth is, O Mirza, that you say right, and you do nothing without calculation; but by the soul of your child, are we not Persians and Mussulmans? and if we are fallen into the hands of an ignorant and unclean generation, whose fault is it, if it be not that of our destiny? The chief of our nation is a despotic king, there is no doubt of that; but powerful as he is, can he prevail against that which is written in the book of fate?'

'The Hajji says right,' exclaimed Mohamed Beg. '*Takdeer*, destiny, after all, is what we must all look to; we eat, we drink, we sleep, we arrive, we depart, not an action of our lives but

is predestined ; and if it be ordained, O elchi, that you cannot see the king of the Franks before a certain day, what can you, one of God's creatures, do to the contrary ?

' And if it be my destiny to lose my head,' exclaimed the ambassador, ' what then ?'

' Why, then, off it goes,' answered Mohamed Beg very quietly, ' and may mercy await you !'

' *Mashallah !* praise be to God !' said the ambassador ; ' I am your humble servant. If I know then that my head is to be cut off, shall I not try to keep it on my shoulders ? Go to, go to, Mr. Astrologer ; learn better doctrine ; or by the shah's beard, you shall find that your heels are predestined to take up the position of your head.'

Seeing him in this untoward humour, we left him ; and we were happy to hear him order his *kalioun*, which we knew always operated as a sedative, whenever the fire of agitation had been kindled in the furnace of his heart.

CHAPTER XX.

The ambassador is visited by the English prime minister.—Hajji Baba's remarks upon men in office.

THE visit of the minister for foreign affairs had been so abrupt and unexpected, that we had not had time to prepare refreshments suited to the dignity of his character; an attention which is never failing in our own country, however different it may be among the Franks. He had only been treated to the common ceremony of sweet and bitter coffee, with intervening smoke; and as we were come on a friendly mission, the sweet coffee, emblem of the good feeling which prevails between the two countries, was served first; while the bitter, being reserved for the emblem of the disagreements which sometimes intervene between sovereigns, was presented last. Whether the vizier understood the delicacy of this procedure, we were at a loss to say; we rather thought that his propensities were neither peaceable nor warlike, since he scarcely tasted the sweet draught, and absolutely made wry faces at the bitter one. We were, however, better prepared for the visit of the prime minister; Hassan, the cook, was ordered to exercise all his talent and to dress a breakfast, which would at once show his art, and give a specimen of our national luxuries. He prepared several sorts of *pillaus*. He so judiciously mixed sweets and acids, meats and vegetables, and

poured over the whole such abundance of liquid butter, that the emblem of blending the interests of the two countries, he assured us, was perfect. Then nothing could be more delicate than our sherbets, and the sweetmeats, particularly the *gezenjibin*,* that luxury peculiar to Persia, and of which, considering where our destinies were directing us, we had brought a large store. Several of our sherbet bowls had been broken on the journey, and Hashim was at a loss how to replace them, until, recollecting that he had seen certain vases, some painted, others white, placed in different parts of the English houses, he took possession of three of the handsomest, and served up the sherbets in them. The young mehmander, who happened to have inspected the *conchas*, or trays, as they stood prepared for the breakfast, at the sight of these vases burst into indiscreet laughter, of which none of us could understand the meaning, until explaining the use to which they were generally applied, we were obliged to hide the face of shame under the veil of ignorance; and rendered thanks to Allah, that we had so providentially escaped the quicksands of pollution.

The prime vizier came, unattended by any suite. We remarked that there was a difference between the dress of the viziers and that of other men; the peculiarities of which we concluded pertained to their office. For instance, black silk bags hung at the back of their necks; and as they were something similar to the satin and brocade bags in which the letters of our kings and princes are sent, we conceived this might indicate officers of

* Manna,

despatch ; but then, on the other hand, they wore a long thin weapon by their side, which might, for aught we knew, mean a sword, and thus indicate a lord of the scimitar, but that it looked more like one of our campaigning spits, upon which we make a hasty *kabob* ; and thus they might be taken for the shah's head cooks. Upon inquiry of the younger mebmandar, he told us that this was the dress of ceremony common to Franks, and was the same which they wore when they appeared before their kings, and was now put on in honour of the ambassador.

The prime vizier was a dervish in appearance, so mild, so kind, that we marvelled how the affairs of this great country could be directed by him, when we considered how much vigour and bloodshed must be necessary to keep a large populace in order. Our shahs, who generally act as their own first minister, are the great instruments of government in our land ; but in Turkey, every new grand vizier, in order to establish his reputation for decision, and to create a wholesome fear, generally finds it necessary to begin his career by spilling human blood. He either decapitates a Christian merchant who is too rich, strangles a Janissary, or hangs a Jew. Now it was plain from all the English vizier told us, that he had never cut off a thief's hand, nor even nailed a baker's ear to his own shop-door.

A very handsome breakfast was served up to him, but which, strange to say, did not seem to his taste. The ambassador helped him to the choicest bits with his own fingers ; he even put his hand into the same mess of rice with him, and

gave him his own spoon to drink sherbet with; but he could not be prevailed upon to make the most of the good things before him. We tried him with some *gezenjabin*, which he scrupulously examined; but when Hashim, the footman, had dexterously broken it with his hands, and blown the dust from it with his mouth, he did not seem inclined to carry his curiosity further. 'Surely,' said we, 'this infidel cannot affect to think us impure, that he does not choose to taste our food; he who will not scruple to eat swine's flesh, and to drink of the forbidden wine? and this, too, when our ambassador has laid by his own scruples, has shut his ears to the commands of our holy Prophet, and has treated the Frank as if he were a true believer.' We found that we had still much to learn concerning this extraordinary people.

The ambassador was visited in succession by several other viziers, each of whom held separate departments in the state. There was one whose utility we could not in the least comprehend. He was called the *jungle* vizier; and we were told that his sole occupation was to keep an account of the woods and forests in the kingdom. We concluded that it was throwing away money to pay an officer for looking after that which, in Persia, was esteemed an incumbrance, and which, instead of attaching any value to it, we looked upon as spoiling the face of the country. Strange indeed would it appear to the king of kings were we to inform him that what is only fit for firewood in Persia, is here esteemed worthy the superintendence of a minister of state. There would be no

end to the expenses of government, we thought, if so high an office was to be established for every one of God's gifts to man; at that rate, we might as well create a vizier for our Persian deserts, and make him keep a register of the millions of useless and uncultivable parasangs of sand which are spread over our country, or he might pass his time in counting the trees of the forests of Ghilan and Mazanderan, and tell the shah how many wolves, and bears, and lions belonged to him. Upon making these remarks to the mehmandar, he opened our understandings, by explaining what must necessarily be the value of timber in England; as necessary to her existence as a race of good horses and sharp swords are to Iran. And, indeed, we were soon brought to agree with him when the ambassador received the visit of the ship vizier, whose department was one of such vast importance that he was obliged to have recourse to the help of several deputies, who work under his guidance. Having ourselves sailed in two ships of war, besides seeing many more, we could well understand their importance; for we conceived that to manage even one would require all the wisdom and experience of a statesman; how much more then to manage above a thousand, which we were told the shah of England possessed. The Turks must look upon the difficulty of such a department in the same light as the English, because they frequently appoint viziers, and even muftis, to command their ships. In Persia, although the sea washes Bushire and Ormuz on the one side, and Asterabad and Resht on the other, we scarcely know what a ship means; and when,

please God! we should return to our own country, the stories that we should relate of our voyages would be set down as tales fit only for the Thousand and One Nights.

Many visitors came. Who and what they were it was impossible for us to determine. They were described to us as men in office; some attached to the shah's court; some with others without professions. Our greatest difficulty in receiving their visits was to ascertain who were persons of consequence, and who were not. We trusted that in time we should be able to make the proper distinctions; but at present they almost looked like one and the same person. Their dresses were made upon one model; they all shaved alike; they all sat in the same place;* and they almost all made the same compliments, and the same remarks. One person visited the ambassador, who interested us very much, because we recollected of what great consequence his compeer was at the court of our shah; this was the master of ceremonies. But oh! what a difference between the two individuals. The *Ishcagassi*, the shah's master of ceremonies, in personal appearance has few equals in the world. He is a *kajar*, one of the king's own tribe, who are famous for the magnificence of their beards, and he is blessed with one which surpasses that of his royal master. His dress and manners are unrivalled; his language is the same; and his knowledge in the niceties of *chum wa hum*† is greater.

* The rank of a person in Persia is very much known by the seat he takes on the side carpet.

† Flattery and compliments—humbug.

than that of any man of the court. He is altogether a fine specimen of a son of Iran. But the person who appeared before the ambassador as the king of England's master of ceremonies was an old, fat, and superannuated khan, who tottered so much upon a pair of swollen legs, that we naturally asked whether he had not been receiving the bastinado upon them. He made many apologies for not having called before. We asked him why did he come at all? But at the same time the ambassador, eager for the moment of his audience, and expecting some message to that effect, pressed him to say when we might prepare ourselves. To our delight and satisfaction he informed the ambassador that the king, who generally resides in a castle in the country, would be at his palace in the city in three days, and that there he would receive the embassy. Our joy knew no bounds. '*Alham du lillah!* praises to God!' resounded from our lips; and we loaded the old limping khan with more caresses, and made him more fine speeches and professions than if he had been the king of England in person.

CHAPTER XXI.

The ambassador prepares for his audience of the king of England.—An intervening difficulty occurs.

ALTHOUGH the intelligence we had received from the old master of ceremonies had not been announced in form to the ambassador, yet from that moment we began to make preparations for his audience of the English shah. The presents were unpacked, and a list made of them. The letter of credence from the king of kings was inspected; and the ambassador began to discuss the clothes which he was to wear on the occasion. We also made inquiries upon the best mode of presenting the horses. They had arrived in safety, strange and wonderful to relate; for who ever thought upon our leaving Persia, that they were to abandon the land and the green sward for which, by nature, they were intended to travel for months on the seas. The ambassador was determined to present *Mirvari*, the Pearl, as a horse which had been honoured by the riding of the Asylum of the Universe himself, and was, therefore, anxious to exhibit him to the infidels with all the pomp and circumstance attending a royal horse. He inquired of the mehmandar whether, after the manner of our ancient horses, his belly, legs, and breast, could not receive the

golden tinge of the *khenna* ; but he was disappointed to find that the application of this dye, so ornamental both to man and beast, had not yet reached these obscure regions ; and, therefore, that some other plan must be pursued. The mehmandar promised to exert his ingenuity and that of his own country artists, and we trusted that when the day came every thing would be done worthy of the dignity of our shah and of our country.

The mehmandar, to our great joy, confirmed to us what the master of ceremonies had announced. The shah of England would receive the embassy ere a week had elapsed ; and when Mohamed Beg compared the day to a corresponding one in our calendar, we were rejoiced to find that it fell precisely after the most unfortunate of our days, namely, ' misery Wednesday. '

Mirza Firouz then made inquiries as to the manner in which this ceremony was to be performed ; to which the mehmandar answered that he would be received with the same honours as ambassadors from other powers.

' And how is that ? ' said the Mirza.

' The king, ' said the mehmandar, ' will receive you in his apartments. You will proceed in your carriage to the palace. You will be met by the master of ceremonies, and presented by the vizier for foreign affairs ; and then you will deliver your credentials. '

* The Persians hold all Wednesdays as unfortunate. The last Wednesday of the month of Sefer is the day upon which they expect the last trump will sound at the day of judgment, and that implicates all other Wednesdays.

‘And so, by my beard,’ exclaimed the elchi, ‘you expect that I shall be satisfied with this reception?’

‘And why not?’ said the other. ‘This is the way other ambassadors are received, and what would you have more?’

‘What do I know of other ambassadors?’ remarked the shah’s representative fiercely. ‘There are kings of various denominations in the world, and such are there representatives. I only know whom I am to represent. My sovereign sits upon the most ancient throne in the world. If you want to know who were our ancestors, I will trace them back to you from the time of Noah. After all the Peishdadians were of some account. And when you come to compare your Frank kings, whose names have never even reached Persia, to our ancient sovereigns, it is plain that you are not many steps from the spot where people devour their own folly.’

‘What words are these?’ exclaimed the meh-mandar. ‘Do you wish to change the manners of our country? If your shah chooses to wear a beard, it is no reason that our shah should. Every nation has its own customs.’

‘When your ambassador in Persia,’ said Mirza Firouz, ‘reached the Imperial Gate of Tehran, was he received in the manner that I have been here? No. The king’s *amou** was sent to welcome his arrival before he even entered the city. And when he proceeded to his audience, the

* *Amou*, or *uncle*, is an epithet often given to favourites or play-mates, and is here used in that sense.

streets were lined with troops, salutes were fired, sugar was thrown under his horse's feet; drums, trumpets, and cymbals, resounded throughout the city; the bazars were dressed; the populace were ordered to pay him every respect. He was clothed with robes of honour, and he was allowed to stand in the same room in which the king of kings himself reposed. And, by the beard of the Prophet, I swear that if I am not treated in the same manner, I will proceed as a private individual to the palace, I will ask to see the king, I will place my shah's letter into his hands, and, having said my *khoda hafiz shuma*, 'May God take you into his holy protection,' I will straightway leave the country, and return whence I came.'

'That may be very well to say, as far as you are concerned,' said the mehmandar, 'but my sovereign is somebody also, and is likely to be consulted on this question. Suppose he were not to agree to your visit?'

We saw the storm was impending, and that the mehmandar's words might as well have remained at the bottom of his throat. The ambassador's face was thrown upside down; the hairs of his beard became distended; and he oozed at every pore.

'In short, then,' said the ambassador, his eyes flashing fire, 'am I an ambassador, or am I not?'

'Is my king a king, or is he not?' said the mehmandar, to which, angry as he was, in his own language he mumbled something to himself about 'dam, or dammy,' which word caught the Mirza's ear, and he, recollecting it to have been frequently used on board ship, mistook it as an epithet ap-

plied to himself, and his wrath then broke out something in the following words :

‘ ‘ *Dam,*’ do you say? Am I ‘*dam?*’ If I am ‘*dam,*’ then you are the father of ‘*dam.*’ Why should I remain here to be called ‘*dam?*’ After all I am somebody in my own country. I will defile the grave of ‘*dam’s*’ father. I will do whatever an ass can do to his mother, sister, wife, and all his ancestry. I am not come all this way to eat ‘*dam,*’ and to eat it from such hands.’ Upon which he flung out of the room, leaving the mehmandar to open the eyes of astonishment, and to eat the stripes of mortification.

After this the mehmandar covered his head with his hat, looked at his watch, buttoned his coat, put on his gloves, took up his stick, and then saying to us, ‘May your shadows never be less,’ he deliberately left the house.

We, who were accustomed to the ambassador’s manner, saw nothing extraordinary in what had happened. He had played his part like an able negotiator; he had satisfied us that he was upholding the dignity of the Asylum of the Universe; he knew that his conduct would work in his favour at his own court; and his enemy, Mirza Sheffi, would not have gained a step upon him. He soon returned to us, mightily satisfied with himself, and was not a little delighted when we told him, that, in truth, if the Franks wanted a lesson in the duties of an ambassador, they had only to come to him. ‘They think,’ said I, ‘because they have looking-glasses in their houses, which we have not; because they make clocks, and penknives, and cloth, which we do not; and because they

have got possession of Hind, which once was ours, that we are men to sit behind them, and that they may lead us as they would a *yedek** with a leading-string; but it is not so, praised be the Prophet. We are Persians, and Inshallah, by the help of the ambassador,' said I, 'we shall teach them to play at hide and seek round our little fingers!'

'Yes, yea,' exclaimed Mohamed Beg, 'God is great; may he take the elchi into his holy keeping. Whatever a Frank may do, let us recollect that he is still an infidel. Whatever he may eat, be it swine's flesh or be it lamb's, it still is unclean.'

After this we sat down quite contented, and passed away the morning in applauding the ambassador for having taken so vigorous a measure for asserting the dignity of our shah in a foreign land. But as the day passed off, and the mehmandar not appearing, we began to think that the Franks might not approve of our mode of opening a negotiation; and that if they should happen to take us neck and heels and thrust us out of their kingdom, Mirza Sheffi might hint to the king of kings that his majesty's representative, for want of proper judgment, had been clothed with a *kalaat* only fit for the grandfather of stupidity.† This apprehension began visibly to work upon Mirza Firouz. He inquired at every moment whether the mehmandar had returned; and, by way of consoling himself, he walked about the house inquiring of every one he saw, 'After all, did not I say well? In truth, my an-

* A led horse.

† An old ass.

swers were like arrows. A *hizzib bash*, a Persian red-head, did not come all this way to have his beard laughed at!

At length, his impatience and anxiety getting the better of every other feeling, he sent me to the mehmandar's house with an orange in my hand, and a message requesting that he would not fail to eat his *sham** with him on that day. I knew that when these infidels were once angry it was not easy to restore their brains to a state of sanity without some good management, and therefore I approached him warily. But to my surprise, instead of finding his nature in a state of perverseness, he looked just like one of us after a quarrel, that is, as if nothing had happened, and he immediately acceded to the ambassador's wishes of dining with him.

When he arrived I was in the room with Mirza Firouz, and their meeting was upon the same terms as usual. Putting his hand on the mehmandar's back, and then patting his side, he exclaimed, 'Mashallah! Praise be to God! You are a man indeed! See what it is to have been in Persia! Now, an untravelled Frank would have been really angry, and would at this moment have been eating his rage. But you are a man knowing the world. You know when to begin your anger, and when to leave it off. Hafiz very properly said, 'True love is like a fool's anger. It burns even when the reason for it is gone by.'"

To this the mehmandar answered, 'May your

* The evening meal—the dinner.

friendship never diminish. I have made known your wishes to the vizier for foreign affairs.'

'Well,' said the ambassador, all of a sudden excited, 'and what did he say?'

'He said,' returned the infidel, 'that there would be no difficulty in giving you a public audience. We have plenty of troops, and plenty of coaches, abundance of fine clothes, and fine things, and you shall go before the king, accompanied in any manner you choose.'

'Wonderful!' exclaimed the ambassador, 'wonderful! I do not understand you English at all! You make no difficulties. You leave no room for negotiation.'

'Not upon trifles,' returned the mehmandar.

'Trifles? do you call an ambassador's reception a trifle?' said Mirza Firouz. 'There is not a step made on such an occasion as this in Persia which is not duly measured. And do you call the dignity of sovereigns nothing?'

'The nations of Europe were fools enough in times past,' said the mehmandar, 'to make matters of etiquette affairs of state, and they used to lose intrinsic advantages in pursuing these ideal ones; but they are become wiser; we look upon etiquette now as child's play. However, in consideration of your being Persians, and knowing no better, we do not hesitate in giving you as much of it as you please.'

Upon this the ambassador stroked his beard, pulled up his whiskers, and sat for some time in deep thought. He felt himself lowered in the estimation of the Franks, while at the same time he was aware that he could not act otherwise than

he had done. At length he exclaimed, 'And so the English think that we are men from the woods, asses, beasts of burthen, and know nothing of what the world is about? Be it so, be it so. But this know, that a nation who can trace its ancestry to Jemsheed; who counts a Jenghis Khan, a Tamerlane, a Nadir Shah, an Aga Mohamed Khan, ay, and a Fatted Ali, among its kings, is not accustomed to child's play, and moreover is not at all inclined to take example from the kings of Frank for any part of its conduct in matters relating to its own dignity.'

Upon this, and after a little similar give and take between the parties, they dined, and the table-cloth of hospitality became the *maidan*, the arena for the race of good fellowship.

CHAPTER XXII.

The audience of the king of England is described, as well as the ambassador's mode of settling precedence among his own suite.

THE long wished-for day at length arrived, and the note of preparation was heard throughout the household. To my utter disappointment, I awoke with such a *dildardi* (a heartache), that I found it impossible to stir without pain, and I entreated the ambassador to allow me to remain at home, to which he acceded without any difficulty. This

rather astonished me, considering how anxious he was to be surrounded by his suite on all state occasions, and made me conclude that he still looked upon me as a spy on his actions, and one who would report to his disadvantage any neglect in upholding to the utmost the dignity of our sovereign.

It was delightful to behold the ambassador dressed for the occasion; and as far as it is possible for the thorn of the desert to resemble the splendour of the full-blown rose, he stood an excellent representative of our king of kings. The Franks, 'tis true, little understood the privileges which he enjoyed in wearing certain parts of his dress, which we alone knew he could no more have dared to adopt at Tehran, than he would to eat swine's flesh before a mollah. He wore that distinguishing badge of royalty, a *jika*, on his cap. His sword and dagger were studded with precious stones, and the pearl tassel of a vizier was suspended from his girdle. We all exclaimed 'Mashallah!' as he appeared before us, and involuntarily we made the inclination of our bodies which we only make to our princes.

The master of the horse came early to announce that the horses were ready to proceed; and that, with the greatest difficulty, he had succeeded in making an infidel paint Murwari. 'It had been done,' he said, 'in a manner sufficiently well for England, but in Persia it would have been esteemed a total failure; for, in lieu of a bright orange-colour, the animal had come out a dirty brown from under the hands of the English painter.'

At about noon the streets began to fill with troops, who lined them on both sides; and shortly after a train of most magnificent carriages, driven by richly-attired coachmen, attended by servants profusely ornamented after the manner of Franks, drove up to the door. A great khan of the court waited upon the ambassador to invite him, on the part of the shah of England, to attend his audience; and when every thing was in readiness, and the suite disposed of in the different equipages, he stepped into a carriage, which, we were assured, was used to convey the king's own person, and the procession then proceeded towards the palace.

As I looked from the window, wrapped up in my sheep's-skin, the procession of the English ambassador through Tehran to the foot of the throne of the king of kings came to my recollection, and I made a comparison in my own mind with what I now saw passing under my eyes. It must be owned, thought I, that processions are more magnificent in my own country, and in Turkey, than those of the Franks, if this be a specimen of them. What principally attracted attention here were our own horses, who, by their spirited play, their curvetting and plunging, seemed delighted to be once again brought into action; but all the rest consisted of coaches, which, though splendid, yet after all are objects of but trifling interest. Now, our processions being performed on horseback, the person, whoever he may be, who is the object of them, is immediately brought into open notice, is subject to the gaze of the crowd, and a great interest is produced.

I waited patiently until the ambassador returned, which he did in the same manner he went, and then, eager to know how every thing had passed off, I stood before him. I found him surrounded by the suite, and they were all apparently in the highest good humour.

‘Ah! Hajji,’ he exclaimed upon seeing me, ‘you have indeed lost a sight. A wonderful good shah is this one!’ said he. ‘By my soul! it is in no manner strange that the English should love their king so much. He showed me the same kindness that a father would to his son. It is evident that he bears the true stamp of royalty upon him. The manners and forms of his court, ‘tis true, are widely different from ours; but kings are no doubt the same in all countries; for his commanding look and tone showed me how much he is a king, and put me in mind of the dignity of our own Asylum of the Universe.’

‘One great difference between them,’ exclaimed Mohamed Beg, ‘is that one stands before this king in full security, whereas God only knows how that is before our own shah! The conscience of Persians, I do believe, has been placed in the nape of their necks; it is there that their good or evil works pinch them when in the presence of Fattedh Ali Shah. As for the English, to judge by those who stood round their king, they seemed as unconcerned and as secure as if they and their prince were upon equal terms.’

‘I spoke well,’ exclaimed the ambassador, ‘did I not?’ said he, looking towards his servants.

‘Mashallah!’ they all exclaimed. ‘Plato could not have spoken better,’ said Ismael Beg, the nazir.

‘In truth,’ continued the ambassador, ‘nothing could have been better ordained for the dignity of our shah!’

‘Nothing,’ exclaimed Mohamed Beg. ‘For when we had reached the ‘kissing place,’* we neither took off our slippers, nor did we bow our heads to the ground; nor did we acknowledge ourselves to be sacrifices.’

‘How was that?’ said I. ‘Was there no threshold, no throne, no prescribed spot for taking off your shoes?’

‘What do you say?’ exclaimed the ambassador. ‘I stood as near the king as I stand to you. I put the shah’s letter into his own hands. The king himself stood. We all seemed to be of one *meilis*.† Going before the king in this country is child’s play, compared to what it is in Persia. One neither sees the *folek*, nor the bastinadoing stick; not the semblance of an executioner is exhibited; and I do really believe that if any one of us had even ventured to spit before his majesty, there would have been somebody at hand to say, ‘Much good may it do you!’’

‘This is strange,’ said I. ‘Kings have but a sorry place of it in this country.’

‘Yes,’ exclaimed Taki, the *ferash*; ‘and we *ferashes* should have nothing to do, for every body seems so mighty good.’‡

‘Ay, but,’ said Mohamed Beg, ‘I think the mehmendar told me once, that if in England a

* By kissing place, or *dosgat*, is meant the royal apartment, the threshold of which is kissed before entrance, according to strict Eastern etiquette.

† Assembly.

‡ The *ferashes* in Persia beat offenders on the soles of the feet.

man cursed the king, and swore at his beard, that he was liable to be beheaded.'

'That's bad,' exclaimed the mirakhor, in an under tone. 'I would rather get the bastinado now and then, and have the full use of my tongue.'

'*Gorumsak!* rascal!' exclaimed the ambassador, 'if the shah heard you he would cut your tongue out. Keep to your horses, and let us hear no more of your ass's language. Who was that old man,' said he to Mohamed Beg, 'who did his best to walk before me as we proceeded to the presence!'

'How should I know?' said the master of the ceremonies. 'When I stepped out with my cane of office to clear the way, he, with a long and slender white wand, attempted to push me off; and seeing him shake it to and fro in a strange manner, I thought this might be part of the Frank etiquette; but when I discovered that the vibration of his elbow proceeded from palsy and not etiquette, and that by this he was constantly on the point of rapping your shins, I thought it but right to assert my precedence, and took my place accordingly.'

'Well done,' said the ambassador; 'it was a strange scene taken altogether, and thanks to Allah we have not disgraced ourselves.'

He had not long dismissed us when the noise of uplifted voices was heard in the apartments below, and the tumult at length became so great, that the ambassador himself issued forth from his room to see whence it proceeded. He found Ismael Beg, the nazir, and Aga Beg, the mirakhor, in violent dispute upon precedence. The former asserted

that he was entitled to walk first in the procession; the latter urged the contrary; and from this simple subject the parties in opposition digressed into such gross personalities, that a most violent state of things was the consequence.

The ambassador finding that his orders for ceasing the dispute were disregarded, he ordered both the disputants to receive blows on the mouth with a shoe-heel, which was about being inflicted vigorously upon the mirakhor, when, with all the resolution of a man about doing something new and desperate, he rushed by us all, made for the street-door of the house, and exclaimed, 'I'm king George's man! Ya! king George!' Upon this the ambassador gave a signal for general chase, and at the head of his household, he succeeded in catching the culprit just as he had reached the threshold. 'I'll king George you!' said the ambassador, catching him by the curls behind his ear. 'If I do not make you and your father burn for this I am nobody in this world. I'll king George you!' Upon this, with the help of two or three of us, he threw him down, and having pounded his head for some time on the floor, called for a pair of scissors, with which he inflicted upon him the greatest disgrace a Persian can undergo after the loss of his beard; he cut off his *zuls*, or curls, and then set him loose.

This was a disagreeable ending to the successful doings of the morning, and set us all exclaiming, '*La illaha, illallah!*' for the rest of the day. We could only account for it by the following circumstance:—A Frank, having been appointed to wait upon the servants by way of interpreter, had

taken advantage of his knowledge of the Turkish language, to talk to them of the freedom enjoyed by all ranks of people in England; he informed them that every man was under the protection of the laws—that no man had the right of bastinadoing another—that that privilege only belonged to judges appointed by the king. With such-like doctrine he greatly destroyed their ideas of submission and dependence.

Aga Beg had imbibed these principles, but it turned out that on his first venture he had brought his beard to a bad market. His mortification at the loss of his curls was without bounds—he was proud of them,—he was greatly fond of ornamenting his person, and to find himself thus at once robbed of that which distinguished him as a *kasheng*, a man of fashion, was more than his philosophy could bear. He cursed the Frank interpreter, the Frank king, and the country he had been brought to; and swore that if he could, by any means find his way to Persia, he would that moment take horse, and never stop until he had got within sight of Demawend, and the turrets of Tehran.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Of the etiquette of English visitings.—Of bell ringers, and chiefs of the marrow-bones and cleavers.—Of the East India Company.

THE very day of the ambassador's audience, and for several days after, the house was thronged with people of all descriptions; their principal object being to leave certain little square bits of paper, upon which were inscribed their names and their place of residence, avowedly as a mark of respect to the ambassador; but we were assured that many other meanings were attached to this act, which at present were not discernible, but which in time would be duly divulged. We wondered what possible result could arise from a parcel of invisible people leaving unknown names at our door, and began to conceive that there might be some *shaitanik*, as they say in Turkey, or devilry in the wind; but the mehmendar assured us that such was the custom of the country. Every card meant a visit; and he made it clearly comprehensible to us, that if visiting in England was carried on after the manner of Persia, where the visiter first announces his arrival by a messenger, and then sits through the ceremony of three *kahoons* and as many cups of coffee, that no life would be long enough to go through the ceremonial. Upon this the ambassador thought every

moment too long until he also had acquired the means of making and returning visits ; and when his own name upon a pack of cards was exhibited to him, he exclaimed, '*Shukur Allah!* praise be to Allah!' and immediately ordered a vigorous distribution of them.

We were also visited by men with small books in their hands, whose intentions were quite incomprehensible to us. One man, after the manner of Turkey, required a *bakshish*, or fee, because he assured us that bells had been rung for joy at our arrival, and that he had helped to ring them. Of bells we had never before heard as emblems of joy ; in our country they announced the arrivals of caravans, and occasionally the existence of unbelievers' churches ; but seeing that this was the only public demonstration of joy we had received, the ambassador did not hesitate to bestow what was necessary.

Then came a man who made a register of every person who paid his court to the king ; and he required a fee. 'Oh, this is wonderful,' exclaimed the ambassador ; 'by the beard of the king, let us ask this man some questions,' said he ; 'we shall doubtless learn much from him of the customs of infidels.' We found that this was not an official duty, or one imposed upon him by the court, but optional. His revenue was considerable, considering the extreme anxiety which he assured us existed in most people to see their names registered ; and the punishment which he inflicted for a resistance of his fee was the non-insertion of the name of the person so resisting. But those whose profession was the least intelligible to us

were a company of men who, by way of congratulatory music, were educated to beat the bones of oxen against large hatchets of iron ; and they asked for *bakskish*. We endeavoured to gain some insight into this strange custom, without success, and at length resolved that they must assimilate to our *lutis*, or mountebanks, whose never-failing drums might well be set off against the horrid sounds which must proceed from the English performers on beef-bones and iron.

In fact, every moment added to our stock of information upon Frank manners ; and, in the presence of the ambassador, we were discussing every thing we daily saw when the mehmandar came in great hurry to announce the visit of the kings of Hind. ‘ Oh Ali !’ exclaimed the ambassador, ‘ how is this ? kings are coming, and nobody has announced them to us !’ We ran to the windows to see the state in which these great personages came, expecting at least to see them mounted on elephants, when, strange to relate, we saw two common infidels standing at the side of an old dilapidated carriage full of straw, bartering with its ragged driver for the expenses of their excursion ; and these the mehmandar assured us were the king and deputy king. ‘ How ?’ said the ambassador, ‘ are these the successors to the throne of Aureng Zebe, of Jehangîr, of Shah Allum ? You must be laughing at our beards !’

‘ It is difficult to explain matters in so short a time,’ said the mehmandar ; ‘ they are not properly kings. One is called the chair, and the other deputy chair,’ first pointing to an arm-chair, and

then to a stool, to explain what he meant, and he had scarcely done this when they walked in.

It was difficult to know what etiquette to adopt with these personages ; but they soon showed us that they required none. They were plain-spoken men, without any airs of greatness, looking more like substantial possessors of good shops and warehouses than the owners of kingdoms. The ambassador, after the first compliments were over, endeavoured to have his understanding enlightened upon the sort of government they exercised, so novel to Persians, and so little known in the East. It seems that they are the chiefs of twenty-four, all of whom sit upon chairs, and who have the right of speech and of thought upon matters relating to India. After some attempts to clear up our ignorance, they invited the ambassador to visit their palace, where he would learn more of the nature of their government, by actual inspection, than by hours of explanation. It appeared, however, from the little we could comprehend, that although they possessed kingdoms, they were not in fact kings ; that the revenues of these kingdoms did not belong to them, but to others who enjoyed the fruits of them ; that they were partly concerned in occasionally sending out a king, or *firman firmai*,* to Calcutta ; but that they, their Indian king, their fleets, their armies, were subject to another greater personage still, who was one of the king of England's viziers, who lived in a distinct corner of the city, and that he again was the immediate servant of the real shah of England and of Hindostan.

* A governor by firmans.

Bewildered with this complication of real kings, and little kings, viziers, sitters upon chairs, and sitters upon stools, we held the finger of suspense upon the lip of astonishment, and pondered upon all we had heard, like men puzzling over a paradox. At length our visitors took their leave, and the ambassador promised that he would shortly fix a day for getting better acquainted with, 'Coompani,' of whom he and his countrymen had heard so much; and about whose existence it became quite necessary that Persia should, for the future, have clear and positive information. Instead of reascending their crazy coach, the kings (for so we ever after called them) walked away upon their own legs, and mixed unknown and unheeded in the common crowd of the street.

When they were well off we all sat mute, only occasionally saying, 'Allah, Allah! there is but one Allah!' so wonderfully astonished were we. What? India! that great, that magnificent empire!—that scene of Persian conquest and Persian glory!—the land of elephants and precious stones! the seat of shawls and kincobs!—that paradise sung by poets, celebrated by historians, more ancient than Iran itself!—at whose boundaries the sun is permitted to rise, and around whose majestic mountains, some clad in eternal snows, others in eternal verdure, the stars and the moon are allowed to gambol and carouse! What! is it so fallen, so degraded as to be swayed by two obscure mortals, living in regions that know not the warmth of the sun? two swine-eating infidels, shaven, impure, walkers on foot, and who, by way of state, travel in dirty coaches filled with straw! This.

seemed to us a greater miracle in government than even that of Beg Jan, the plaiter of whips, who governed the Turcomans, and the countries of Samarcand and Bokhara, leading a life more like a beggar than a potentate. But we were in the country of miracles; not a day—no, not an hour passed without our hearing or seeing something which all the grandfathers Persia ever had, or might have, had never seen even in a dream!

CHAPTER XXIV.

Of the Circassian slave, Dilferib.—She adopts the European dress, but refuses to uncover her face.

DURING all this time the Circassian had lived securely confined to her room; and she would probably have continued so, happy and unmolested, had there not existed among these infidels a sufficiently unjust law, which prohibits any one from enjoying the property of his own slave, little examining whether such slave likes his state or not. It tyrannically forces every one to be free; and had it taken effect upon the Circassian, she would have been reduced to the dire necessity of uncovering her face to the gaze of all mankind, and living in open converse with the despisers of our Prophet and the Imams. As soon as this law was intimated to the ambassador he did no hesi-

tate to offer her freedom, and he immediately told her that she was at liberty to do what she liked.

‘Oh prophet! Oh Mahomet!’ exclaimed she, ‘you would not have me so degraded as to go about the streets, with my face uncovered, like one of these unblushing women! No, no; I stay where I am.’

‘But you are free,’ said the ambassador; ‘this is a free country; there are no slaves here—go; there are the gardens; there are the green fields—go, make your soul happy!’

‘My soul wants nothing,’ said she, ‘but the countenance of my master. Let me work for him; let me make his clothes; let me embroider his skull-caps; let me take care of his money and his jewels. I want nothing more. I will think of the rose and the nightingale when we return to Iran; in the meanwhile let us recollect that we are in the hands of disbelievers, and therefore let us put our trust in Allah.’

The ambassador was so pleased with this self-devotion of his slave, that he ordered her to have what clothes she pleased, and expressed a wish that she should leave off her Circassian dress, which had now become ragged, and adopt the gowns of the Franks. He said that the shah had ordered him to bring back to the royal harem models and specimens of the Frank women’s dresses; and he ordered Dilferib to begin by trying them on her own person. Accordingly, a dark-green velvet was selected for her first gown, and an English dress-maker was ordered to fit it to her shape. The dress-maker suggested the necessity of a great many more articles of attire too nu-

merous to describe ; but the ambassador objected to them. 'No, no,' said he ; 'let us be content with the outside of things, and let the hidden take care of themselves.'

The gown was made, and great was the joy produced. The Circassian was ordered to be clothed in it. She put ear-rings in her ears, dressed her hair after the manner of Europe, and then stood before her master ; but in so doing, she shivered throughout her frame, as if she had been clad in the snows of Demawend.

'What ails thee, child ?' said he, 'why do you shiver ?'

'May it please my *aga*, my lord,' said the poor girl, 'if such be the clothes of the disbelievers, their women must be made of the flesh and blood of animals ; I am freezing.'

Upon examination we found, that, excepting the one single covering of the green velvet gown, she stood as nature had made her. No wonder then that she shivered. The ambassador said that he would consult the English women upon the articles which she ought to wear ; and in the meanwhile, resuming her Circassian costume, she recovered the warmth she had lost, and replaced the green velvet gown over all to give a finish to her appearance.

In the meanwhile we found that the whole city had been thrown into a ferment of curiosity. Our house was thronged with the women of London, and with those tongues of theirs, which as Saadi saith, 'make the heart to talk, and the foot to walk, without the *mehmandari* of the head,' they set on foot a sort of pilgrimage to the shrine

of this unfortunate maiden. But in so doing, Allah! Allah! wonderful sights did they exhibit to us poor sops of the faithful. Marvellous eyes! without mercy, without compassion were they! I really saw some beauties among them, before whom our blessed king of kings (upon whom be mercy and peace!) would be happy to creep on his hands and knees. They, however, cared so little about being seen, that it never occurred to them once to attempt to throw a veil over their faces. Poor Franks! thought we, to be restricted only to one for life! If our divine Prophet had set up his staff here, instead of the blessed regions of Mecca, he would have given his followers six instead of four. For my part, I died daily; and as for our ambassador, we all saw how it would be! His heart would become roast meat before another moon was over, and he would soon be reduced to the veriest *Majnoon** that ever got thin upon cheek nurture and eye food.

But day after day they came to see the Circassian, bringing with them all sorts of toys and presents; all out of compassion, said they, to her imprisoned and deplorable state of slavery. Some gave her pictures, others dolls, others books. Dilferib was grateful for their attentions, and deplored their degraded state; but she became indignant when they endeavoured to persuade her, and even to attempt force, to wear their stockings. To her astonishment they protested that nothing could be more indecent than to appear with naked feet. 'How?' exclaimed Dilferib! 'you make

* The Persian Abelard—the lover of *Leilah*.

such a point of covering your legs, and still, in defiance of all modesty, you expose your faces! Strange ideas of decency you must have indeed! All women's legs are alike. There can be no immodesty in leaving them naked; for nobody, by seeing them, could know one woman from another; but the face, that sacred spot, sacred to modesty, sacred to the gaze of none but a husband; that which ought to be covered with the most scrupulous delicacy; that you leave uncovered, to be stared at, criticised, laughed at, by every impudent varlet that chooses.' 'Allah! Allah!' exclaimed the offended Dillerib, to a young female infidel who was one day pressing upon her acceptance a pair of long cotton stockings, '*At-tafarallah!* Allah forgive me! Are you mad? Has your brain become diseased? Give me free legs, a muffled face, and the favour of the holy Prophet, and say no more. Strange ill-luck has ours been that has brought us to a country where the women cover their legs, and uncover their faces!

But with all their good nature towards Dillerib, there was part of their conduct which we could in nowise understand. Although they all freely came to see her, yet not one would help to cheer her solitude by procuring her a companion. 'Who would keep company,' said they, 'with a woman who is not married to the man she lives with? It was as much as their reputations were worth.' There was one person to whom the ambassador offered various advantages, if she would live with and educate his slave, who became quite outrageous at such a proposal. She would walk

and talk with men in the open streets, look at men, take them by the arm, be visited by men, and nobody would think the worse of her for such doings; but she became all rage and fury the moment it might be said of her that she did the like with one of her own sex, who stood in the predicament of the unoffensive Diltarib. Now, what should we say of such a woman in our country? Why, her hair would be cut off, and she would be paraded throughout the city on an ass, with her face to its rump, and its tail in her hands, and then thrust out into the open desert as one soiled with impurities. Such is the difference of manners in different countries: who can doubt for a moment which is best, when in the blessed Koran we read these words, 'Speak unto the believing women, that they restrain their eyes, and preserve their modesty, and discover not their ornaments, except what necessarily appear thereof; and let them throw their veils over their bosoms, and not show their ornaments, unless to their husbands, or their fathers,' &c.

Now every ornament that an English woman possesses, she shows to whoever chooses to look at them. Every father, son, husband, brother, in the country can look at her. She wears nothing to restrain her eyes; and, consequently, nothing to restrain those of any one else. And as for modesty, and as for throwing veils over bosoms, Allah! Allah! our blessed Prophet himself would have had severe work of it here! What then was our fate? we, poor strangers, to whom women were new; who had never seen others than our mothers, and occasionally our sisters, excepting

those among us who were married: we who, when the shah's wives were abroad, were obliged to run for our lives, and to hide ourselves as if death was walking about seeking to devour us: and thus to have a world of *houris*, such as no paradise could ever boast of, thrown open to our view; fascinating our eyes, and bewildering our senses; all to be seen without any apprehension of a jealous husband, without the fear of empalement! The change was too great for our natures, and we talked and dreamed of nothing else. For my part, although, after the dangers which I had undergone in the possession of the unfortunate Zenab, and the malignant Shekerleb, I imagined myself cured for ever of the soft passion; yet here at every step love jumped into my soul, and my heart thrilled with ecstasy at the contemplation of the irresistible attractions of the infidel daughters of the Franks.

CHAPTER XXV.

The ambassador is admitted to an audience of the queen, and displays his presents.

THE presents which the ambassador had brought to the shah of England became the talk of the whole city. Every body ran to see the horses. The shawls were the envy of the women; and the poetical mirror excited universal admiration. He was now waited upon by a khan, whom the mehmandar introduced as the master of ceremonies of the queen of England, and whom we supposed might be the chief guardian of the seraglio; but the words of the English elchi in Persia were confirmed. We were assured that the Franks did not prepare and appoint such officers, and that no watch was placed over the honour of the king's women. The business of this khan, he explained, was to introduce persons worthy of such an honour to the royal *banoo*, and he accordingly invited the ambassador and his suite to an audience. Notwithstanding this invitation, the ambassador, still fearing that he might offend by such a liberty, anxiously inquired whether the shah of England was privy to this arrangement; but it did not seem that his permission was at all necessary, for she saw and conversed with all men who were agreeable to her. Seeing that such really was the custom of the country, the ambas-

sador, without fear of any kind, and expressing no solicitude about us, his followers, freely accepted the invitation, and the next day was appointed for the audience. In the meanwhile, he delivered the presents with which he was intrusted for the English queen to the khan, but reserved to himself the duty of presenting the letter into her own hands.

We were strangely excited by the expectation of what we were about to see. A Persian scarcely dares to think upon the pictures which his imagination forms of the dazzling splendour, and the unrivalled beauty of the inhabitants of the shah's harem; and here we were on the very threshold of those delights which even in our country were the theme of every tongue. We were going to see the women of the king of the Franks, perhaps his daughters. Such good fortune could fall to the lot but of few! 'Praise be to Allah!' said we, 'if the beauties that we hourly see in the highways, and at the corners of the streets, be such as to enslave our souls, what must be the charms of those who have enslaved a king's heart; of those who, perhaps, are not permitted to meet the gaze of the multitude like other women, and whose charms must be like the gems which lie secure in the royal treasury!'

The ambassador dressed himself with unusual splendour, adorning his person with a shirt made by an infidel sempstress, embroidered at every extremity, and whiter than the snows of Agridagh.* I remembering those parts of my face which had

* Mount Ararat.

attracted the capricious Shekerleb, made my best efforts to renovate their beauties. Every hair in my beard was newly dyed and perfumed, my mustache curled to the corners of my eyes, and the locks behind my ears received a fresh glow. The morning came, we were all dressed, the ambassador sprinkled rose-water over the muslin and silken covers of the auspicious letter, and then mounting the royal carriages which had been sent for us, we proceeded to the palace.

We were received by nothing but men. There was no appearance of the house being inhabited by women; every thing living was male. How different from our countries, where nothing in the seraglio can put the fair prisoners in mind of man, saving the presence of their own husbands, and perchance their brothers! After having been paraded through several rich apartments, in which we saw nothing that indicated womankind, we at length at a distance espied petticoats, and little by little came in sight of some very grotesque-looking females, who, for aught we knew, might be royal wives, for by their shapes they were evidently bidding fair to add, each in their turn, some *shah zadeh*, or prince, to the already doubtless numerous royal family. As we approached, we began to find that we must be mistaken, for some were so old as to make so fortunate an event for them quite impossible; and therefore we concluded, that what had attracted our eyes was in fact nothing but a most extraordinary caprice of dress, and which we afterwards learned was worn at court only, no woman venturing to approach the royal person who had not so deformed herself.

We now evidently were on the very margin of our hopes. The women who stood before us we supposed might be some of the *khanums* and *beg-gums* about the court, who were doing the duties of the antechamber; but what was our surprise when the master of the ceremonies paraded the ambassador before a lady, standing with her back to a magnificent mirror, and she, we found, was the great *banoo* of the country. Whatever might have been our expectations, we were very soon awed into a respect and consideration for the august personage before whom we stood, much beyond that which we thought it possible any woman could have inspired. She had more the looks of a grand vizier than a woman. She asked the ambassador questions which only learned men in Persia ask; questions which would have puzzled some of our deepest scribes. The king of England, it was plain, was very wise to dispense with the care and superintendence which we exercise in our harems over such a wife, for with her wisdom she might have governed an empire, much less herself. From her quiet and dignified manner we ever after called her the *Arām banoo*,* the Calm Princess. When the ambassador presented the letter with which he was charged, the queen inquired whether it was written with the *banoo's* own hand? I saw the blush of confusion overspread the ambassador's face, for, alas! writing is not the accomplishment of a Persian lady; and therefore what could he say? He owned that it had been written by the great moonshee of the

* This is a title frequently applied to persons of dignity.

state ; and when the queen looked on the translation she smiled ; but whether in admiration or otherwise, no one was present to inform us.

She then inspected the presents, and principally fixed her attention upon the full suit of a Persian woman's dress. The beauty of the embroidery, the richness of the stuffs, and the brilliancy of the gold and precious stones with which it was ornamented, seemed to attract her admiration. She was anxious to have every part explained, and every woman in the room crowded near the ambassador as he showed how it was to be worn. They understood the nature of the chemise, although they marvelled at its make, and inquired why the skirts were so short. They made many remarks on the *jubbeks* and the jackets ; but when they came to the trowsers, their merriment, though tempered by the dignified presence of the queen, could scarcely be kept within bounds. They looked at themselves, and then at the *zeer jumehs* ; there was no resisting their mirth. Stiffened with brocade, and padded with cotton, the object of their merriment stood erect in the middle of the room, and certainly made an extraordinary contrast with the flowing robes worn by the Frank women. An *arac gir** attracted great admiration, owing to the great labour of needlework bestowed upon it, and every body present was anxious to know how so small a cap could sit on the crown ; but when the head-pins were produced, the difficulty was explained. Certain magnificent *lahafs*,

* A skull-cap—literally, a catcher of dew.

or quilts, were prized by the queen, as well as the Cashmerian shawls and the Ispahan velvets.

The ambassador acquired credit by explaining the medicinal properties of the *mîmiai** (so famed in Persia), of which he had brought a small quantity in a gold enamelled box; and we thought that there was much incredulity to be read in the different faces round us, when he averred, that, should a man, horse, or chicken, have a leg broke, and a bandage spread over with the unguent be bound round the fracture, a moon will scarcely pass ere the leg will be quite restored to its former state.

We had been so much taken up in attending to the queen, that we had not looked about for those beauties, her daughters, upon whom our imaginations had so fondly dwelt. We saw no moon-faces, no cypress waists, no antelope eyes, no silken tresses that touched the ground; but presently we bowed the head to several gorgeously-dressed ladies, upon seeing whom we were obliged to exclaim, '*Mashallah!* Praises of Allah!' for fear the evil eye should assail them. They also asked many condescending questions, and though our ideas of king's daughters, which were drawn much from imagination, and much from what we had read of in *Antar* and the *Thousand and One Nights*, were here not verified, yet we came away satisfied that a veiled face was of much less consequence in this country than in ours; and that reason and sense here did the business of guardians and deans.

* A precious gum, which distils from a rock in Kerman.

We eagerly inquired whether the royal daughters were wives also ; but, strange to say, they were not. 'How?' said the ambassador to the mehmandar. 'Why does not your king do as ours? Why does he not oblige your viziers and great khans to rub their foreheads upon the threshold of the royal palace, and receive as the greatest boon that can be bestowed on them, the hands of his daughters in marriage? Our king not only condescends to confer such-like benefits, but frequently extends his munificence by bestowing upon them presents of his own children, adding thereto the more aged *banoo*s, their mothers ; and by the royal beard, I swear, that if they do not immediately fall upon their faces, kiss the ground, and say, 'May the shadow of the king of kings never be less ! may the royal house prosper !' their heads would not be worth a piece of black money each ! By your father's beard ! we settle these matters better in Persia.'

Inquiring farther, we found that royal persons among the Franks marry after the manner of Mussulmans ; that is, they do not see the husband or wife intended for them, but take them upon description. Some old woman is sent by the husband to look at the intended bride ; she is wooed at a distance, and then is brought to him ; and be she fair, or be she otherwise, she becomes his wife.

We whispered into the mehmandar's ear, asking whether any of the ladies before us were the king of England's slaves ; or whether perchance they might purposely have been kept out of sight : but he repeated what we never before

had fully believed, that his majesty had no slaves, and that of wives he had but one. 'But has he no dancing women belonging to his court? no story-tellers? no setters to sleep?' said we.

The mebmandar assured us that such persons were not in use in Frank courts; that men and women danced together, for their own amusement, and not for pay; that story-tellers were rather avoided than patronised; and, as for setters to sleep, although there was in fact no want of them, yet that they were not made official appointments about the person.

We left the queen with our eyes much more open than they were before our interview. Every day taught us something new; and what before seemed unintelligible, particularly on the subject of women, began now to stand clearer before our understandings.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Difficulties of settling the direction of Mecca in London.—The Persians determine to adopt their own customs, and kill their own mutton.

WE had been so much taken up by our various visitings, that we scarcely had had time to reflect that we were Mussulmans, and that we were living among infidels. Such had been the dissipation in which we passed our days, that the duties of praying and washing at our appointed times were daily becoming lax, to the horror of Mohamed Beg, who being a strict observer of our faith, did not cease upbraiding us for our neglect, and strongly upheld the necessity of keeping ourselves pure from the contagious example of those around us, who, in fact, appeared to live in the world without any religion at all. He had been anxious to settle the true direction of the *kebleh*,* which he had never yet done in England to his satisfaction. His *kebleh nemah*, or compass, had unfortunately been broken; and he was doubtful whether any compass we might procure from the deriders of our faith would set us in the right way; and even whether it might not purposely mislead us, by pointing to some impure spot instead of the sacred shrine of our holy Prophet. Then,

* The point to which Mahomedans turn in prayer—Mecca.

to his utter dismay, he had not seen the sun once since our arrival ; and he was seriously apprehensive that the accounts which, in Persia, were currently believed concerning Frangistan were about being realized, and that England, in fact, had no sun. He therefore began to give up all hope of settling his kebleh, until one morning, with joy painted in his countenance, he rushed into the presence of the ambassador, followed by many of the servants, exclaiming, ‘ *Mujdeh !* good news ! the sun is come ! the sun is here !’ and, in fact, upon looking up, amidst a yellow atmosphere, composed of smoke and vapour, there we saw it sure enough. But many of us were inclined to doubt whether this could be the glorious luminary that we had in Persia, for there nobody had an eye strong enough to brave its brilliancy ; whereas, here we gazed upon it at our ease, quite as well as if it were a moon. However, having satisfied ourselves that it was, in fact, the sun, we were all very happy ; and seeing that this auspicious sight took place upon a white day,* the fifteenth of the month, we exclaimed, ‘ *Mobarek !* good fortune !’ to the ambassador ; while Mohamed Beg became convinced that he had acquired the true direction of the land of our faith.

But this joy of ours at seeing the sun was the cause of confirming many of the English in their ignorance concerning our religion. We were taken for worshippers of fire, and they concluded that we adored the sun. One of their khans, a

* Superstitious people in Persia make a distinction between lucky and unlucky days, which they call black and white days ; the 13th, 14th, and 15th of every month are white days.

lord of great consequence, who sat in the king's assembly, and gave his opinion upon things fitting and things unfitting, never approached the ambassador without saying, 'Well, sir! no sun yet!' One day, when it was freezing, he found the ambassador seated near the fire, warming himself. 'Oh, sir,' said he, 'I see you are worshipping the fire!' Upon this, Mirza Firouz, in wrath, exclaimed to me, who was standing before him, 'What words are these? He does not know, that if we were worshippers of fire, it would not be the offensive smoky fires of his country.* Even the Guebres, who are scarcely good enough to manure our fields, are scrupulous as to the purity of their fire; what then must we be, who look upon them as the uncleanest of infidels?' Then turning to the mehmandar, he said, 'For the love of Allah! tell the khan that we never worship fire in our country except when it is cold;' to which Mohamed Beg, who was also in the room, added, 'And tell him that our holy Prophet, blessed be his name! hath ordained, in the forty-first surai of ~~the~~ Book, 'worship not the sun, neither the moon; but worship God who hath created them.' This did not seem to satisfy the khan, but he entered into a long explanation, through the mehmandar, about an ancient infidel who seemed to know a great deal more about our country than any of our own historians; and who

* The Guebres keep up their sacred fire with fuel that produces neither smoke nor smell. They do not allow bones, odour, or filth of any sort, to be mixed with it; and will not even permit it to be lighted by blowing with the mouth, for fear of any impure odour.

in spite of all we could say to the contrary, had made him and all England believe that we worshipped fire ; and, moreover, that we cut our horses throats' in honour of the sun.

'Ha, ha!' exclaimed the ambassador, who was always ready for a joke ; ' seeing that you have no sun in your country, to whose honour, may I ask, do you cut your horses' tails ?'

The khan then went his way rubbing his hands, saying that fire was a very good thing.

Deploring the ignorance of the nation we were doomed to live with, we determined no longer to lose sight of what was due to our religion, but to adhere to the practice of those ordinances decreed by our blessed Prophet, and to stand forth as champions of the true faith ; accordingly we determined to kill our own mutton. The English servants, when they saw Hassan, the cook, about to cut the throat of a sheep in one of the apartments of the house, exclaimed against the filth that such a custom would create ; but when they heard Mohamed Beg roaring out the *Bismillah*, and otherwise explaining our law, which forbids man to eat that out of which the blood hath not flowed, they opened the eyes of astonishment, and dropped the head of acquiescence. The ambassador also ordained that every fowl, for the future, was to have its throat cut, and to be thrown on the ground to bleed to death, after the Persian manner ; so that, by the blessing of Allah, we might eat our food without endangering our consciences.

Having established these customs, we began to pray and eat more at our ease than we had done since we left our country ; although we were con-

vinced that, living in an impure country, our prayers could not be of the same avail, no, not by one-half, as those made upon our own soil. Mohamed Beg threatened us with a double allowance of praying, which would not fail to be decreed to us by the mollahs the moment we reached Persia, saying there was no *behesht*, no paradise, for those whose entreaties to the throne of Allah came from a land 'overrun with swine, and overflowed with wine,' for they would be arrested before they came to the gates of the highest heaven. This operated agreeably upon our spirits, and made most of us cease praying; 'for,' said we, 'if we are to pray double upon returning to Persia, what use is there in praying at all while we are in England?' Right happy were we at this scheme, notwithstanding the solemn looks of Mohamed Beg, who wagged his head to and fro, and exhorted us never to lose sight of the dignity of Mahomedans, and of the duties which our faith enjoined.

We now ventured to walk through the streets, although our dress and appearance attracted much observation; but as we proceeded through the great labyrinth of the city, we began to fear that we should never find our way back. We had nothing by which to direct our steps, for every house appeared the same in our eyes. All the doors were alike, and the windows of the same shapes. There was neither bath, nor caravanserai, nor barber's shop, nor even a dunghill, that we could discover, from whence we could take a fresh departure; but when we got into a great street it was interminable, and one might walk more in a straight line than in the *Chahar Bagh* of Ispahan.

We lost ourselves so frequently, even at short distances from our own home, that I determined to adopt a plan which I had practised with success in the forests of Mazanderan, when I was a prisoner among the Turcomans. There I cut notches in the trees as I went, and by this means recovered myself if I lost my way. Here I provided myself with a piece of chalk, and marking every corner, I at length succeeded to walk great distances, and to find my way back without the help of any one. But these excursions were hazardous, for we were among a strange people, and scarcely a day passed without an adventure. Once I had strolled to some distance with Mohamed Beg; and as good luck would have it, our walk took us into green fields. There were many people walking to and fro; it was probably a Christian festival; the day happened to be fine, and the sun shone almost as bright as in our country. We came to a beautiful spot, with grass smooth as a carpet, and Mohamed Beg exclaimed, 'Allah! Allah! what a charming place for saying one's prayers.' At this moment a clock of one of the mosques struck the English noon, and he could no longer resist. There is the *zohor*, noon,' said he, 'and although we have no muezzin to make the profession of faith, and to call us to prayer, still let us not disregard the notice. Here is water at hand; we will wash, and then make our devotions.' To say the truth, I never had been a great sayer of prayers. Since the days when I was a prisoner in the sanctuary at Kom, where I had prayed enough for the remainder of my life, and where I had had a surfeit of genuflection, I had always played at 'hide and seek'

with my religious duties, never going upon my knees unless there was danger in not doing so. The absence of all such necessity in this unholy country was to me one of its greatest attractions, and therefore I cared not to leave it. But at the same time I did not wish to offend my companion: and although I refused his invitation, yet I assured him that I would wait until he had finished his devotions.

He first washed his hands, arms, feet, and back of his ears, in an adjoining stream, and having ascertained the direction of Mecca, he sat down and combed his beard. He then took from his person his seals, rings, looking-glass, and every thing of value which he had about him, and taking the piece of holy earth,* together with his beads, from his breast, he placed them before him, and put himself in the first attitude of prayer. By this time the infidels began to gather around us. What they took us for, it is difficult to say; most likely for jugglers, for they all looked with intense interest at the different trinkets which Mohamed Beg had displayed on the grass. As he stood up with his feet joined together, emphatically pronouncing the *fathch*,† upon raising his hands before him, I verily believe that they expected to see him vault into the air, or make a somerset, as I have seen some of their own mountebanks do in the street; but when he merely went through his prostrations, touching the piece of holy earth, in-

* The Persians at prayers place before them a piece of clay, said to be part of the soil of Mecca, and which is stamped with holy invocations.

† The first prayer in the Koran.

scribed with the names of our blessed Prophet and the twelve Imams, with his forehead, they seemed quite disappointed ; and one of them had the insolence to take it up and hand it about to his fellows to look at. Upon this my Persian pride was roused. Reprobate as I was, I could not see ourselves so insulted, and a bit of our holy Mecca so abused. I darted forwards to snatch the relic from the hand of one of the infidels ; my effort was received with loud hootings. Mohamed Beg now in wrath got upon his legs, and, heedless of any thing but the insults offered his religion, drew his knife, and would have buried it in the bowels of one of the infidels, when he received a blow which must have been inflicted by some unseen agent, some *dive*, or some English *gin*, which was thrown so exactly into the very centre of his stomach, that his wrath was soon turned into vomiting ; his beard became distended, his face turned white, and his eyes streamed. Never had prayer been so little propitious. Instead of pouring forth blessings, his mouth consoled itself with curses ; and whenever he could take breath, it was refreshing to hear him devote the whole English nation to perdition, and announce to them that their fathers were now roasting in the fires of *Jehanum*.

Our situation was not very enviable, particularly when we saw an inclination on the part of the surrounding mob to proceed to something more violent than beating Mohamed Beg's stomach. There was one man more violent than the rest, who performed many feats, the object of which we could in no wise understand : he clenched his fist, put it close

to my nose, and then took off his coat. This I conceived implied hostility, although I knew that taking off a hat implied the contrary. To my astonishment, I saw another man in the crowd step forward and also divest himself of his coat: strange compliments, thought I, but I was soon undeceived. In one of the parties I recognised one of the English servants employed by the ambassador; and had scarcely had time to make myself known to him, when, to our extreme horror and amazement, Mohamed Beg and I saw a fight between these two men, the equal of which we had never before seen, not even by the shah's best *pehlivans*. They fought with great vigour and resolution; but our servant, in a very short time, was the victor. His blows fell thicker upon his antagonist's face than upon the feet of a sufferer under the bastinado in Persia, until every feature was lost, and he begged for mercy. After he was well beaten, they both shook hands, and walked off apparently good friends. We, however, could not recover our astonishment, nor could we at all comprehend the object of our servant's interference, although he assured us that he only fought out of compliment to us. We had frequently before heard of the hospitality of the Arabs to a stranger; of his killing his last sheep for his entertainment; of his depriving himself of every thing rather than that his guest should suffer: but that he should stand up, and fight, and run the chance of losing his eyes, or getting his nose knocked off, or his head broken for the stranger, that we had never yet heard. And yet we had seen this very act performed by an infidel.

whom in our minds we condemned to eternal punishments. Mohamed Beg puzzled his head for a long while how to find some satisfactory reason for this phenomenon; but all he could discover was, that the beating which had most likely been intended for him had, by the interposition of fate, fallen on another. We returned home making many exclamations, and astonished the ambassador by a recital of all we had witnessed.

CHAPTER XXVII.

*Hajji Baba describes the opening of parliament.
—Of certain English customs, and of love at first sight.*

ABOUT this time there seemed to be a great and universal stir among the English. Houses which had remained empty all of a sudden appeared to be inhabited. The streets, which we before thought abundantly populous, were now positively so thronged with people and carriages, that it was with difficulty one could pass; and the women began to run about, and to knock at each others' doors in a manner quite strange to behold. The whole scene put us much in mind of the return of the shah, his court, and his camp, to Tehran, from his summer's campaign in the plains of Sultanieh.

We inquired the cause of all this, and received various reasons. We were told that the great

council of the state was about to sit ; and that, although the country had already more than one thousand and one volumes full of laws, yet that more were wanted. Some said that the government squandered away too much money, and that less must be expended for the future. Others assured us that the council met to discuss an old question, upon which they had argued for these last hundred years, and upon which they were not further advanced than when they first began ; and this was, whether seven million of their population should continue to be discontented and rebellious, or the contrary ? We would not believe any one of these statements ; for we asked, does it stand to reason that a nation so powerful, so prosperous, and so abounding in riches, as this, could lay itself open to such unheard-of imputations ? The ambassador determined to learn as much of the truth as possible, in order to transmit it at full length to the shah. ‘How !’ said he, ‘we have only one book, to wit, the Koran, which contains all our law ; and here,’ said he, ‘we find that camel-loads of books are not enough ! If every *cazi* and *sheikh el Islam** in England, who, perchance, might be sent to dispense justice over the land, were to travel, they would require at least fifty camels to carry about their requisite knowledge. Then as to settling what the government is to spend, in the name of Allah, what may be the use of a king, if he has not unlimited command over his treasury ? Our king of kings would cut off any body’s ears, did he dare call into question the

* Titles given to Persian men of the law.

right of a sovereign not only over his own wealth, but over the property, ay, over the lives of all his subjects. The other question was past our comprehension ; it related in some measure to religion. From what we heard, it was plain that Mahomedans would have but a sorry existence of it in England ; for if her own subjects were not allowed to pray after their own fashion, what, in the name of the shah's beard, could we expect ? If they are looked upon as dogs, we might be treated as dogs' uncles !'

Notwithstanding this extraordinary conduct of the English towards their king, it appears that he goes willingly every year in state, surrounded by all the majesty and magnificence of a crowned head, to open the deliberations of the council, and even to invite them to settle how much he ought to spend ; how many ministers ; what number of generals ; how many troops ; what quantities of ships ; what ambassadors to maintain ; in short, how many expenses of every description he ought to incur. They even have the audacity, we were assured, to settle in what manner he ought to support his own wife. If one half of this were true, we concluded that we might as well believe the other half ; and, in order to be convinced with his own eyes, the ambassador willingly accepted an invitation to be present at the ceremony of opening the council, which, from what we could learn, resembled in some measure the great *selam-i-aum*, the great prostration of the people before the shah in Persia, on the festival of the *No Rouz*.

The mehmandar informed the Mirza Firouz that the number of persons admitted to the shah's

presence on this occasion was restricted to a certain few ; and therefore it was proposed that neither I nor any of his Persian suite should be of the party. Accordingly we saw him depart, accompanied only by the mehmandar ; but we determined to make our way to the scene of action, in order to observe the passage of the royal procession. The whole city was in motion. Never before had we seen such an assemblage of infidels. We, a handful of true believers, looked indeed rather insignificant in the great mass ; but we were proud of being such, and would not have given one hair of our beards for the millions of black hats that waved to and fro before us. We posted ourselves under a tree in a garden leading to the house of assembly. Several avenues bordered the road through which the king was to pass ; and, in order to keep it clear, on each side were posted cavalry, mounted upon superb horses. For the time being we attracted more attention than any thing else, and were beginning to feel the insolence of the crowd, when luckily their attention was soon after diverted from us by the approach of the king, and we opened all our eyes to see his majesty pass. Before the procession had reached us about a *maidan*, we heard strange and unaccountable sounds, which we took for the English mode of paying homage to their monarch ; sounds which in some measure assimilated to the greetings made by the Arabian women upon the approach of a great personage. They were a mixture of cries, groans, and hisses. As the great coach in which the king sat drew near, the rush of the crowd was immense, and immediately there:

issued from the thousands that stood near us such a shower of hisses, that we felt sure that no king could be more beloved by his people than this. So much loyalty was instantaneous in its effect ; it was as catching as fear ; and, almost involuntarily, we added our most unaffected hisses to those of the surrounding crowd, the hue of our faces almost becoming black with the exertion. All the collected serpents of the plains of *Mogan** in a rage could not exceed the noise we made. We became the point of observation to all beholders. But what was our astonishment, I may add consternation, when, instead of meeting with the encouragement and commendation we expected, we found ourselves surrounded by a host of men, with short painted sticks in their hands, backed by some individuals of the cavalry, who most unceremoniously invited us to dislodge from our tree, and to walk away with them to places unknown !

‘What do these men want?’ exclaimed Mohamed Beg ; ‘what dirt do they eat ?’

‘Shall I give them a taste of the knife ?’ asked Aga Beg, the master of the horse.

‘Use no violence, by your child’s soul !’ exclaimed I, ‘or they will strike our stomachs, as they did Mohamed Beg’s.’

The scene becoming much confused, we were about being very awkwardly situated, when a well-dressed Frank stepped up, and, seeing who we were, immediately interfered, and explained to the men with painted sticks, that whatever we might

* A tract of country near the river Araxes, famous for its numerous serpents.

have done it must have been through ignorance. He released us from their superintendence ; and having kindly accompanied us to our home, we there explained all that had happened ; and then to our confusion we found, that, instead of paying honour and respect to the shah of England, we had in fact been treating him worse than a dog. ‘*La illaha, illallah !* There is but one God !’ exclaimed Mohamed Beg. ‘What a country is this ! Who ever thought of abusing one’s king to his face too ! Let us leave this people ; they are too bad. One never sees them pray ; their wives are without shame ; and they heap abomination upon their own king’s head !’

‘By my soul,’ exclaimed Aga Beg, ‘I thought that hissing was the Frank mode of doing honour. We have all made a feast of abomination !’

‘But pray, sir,’ said I to the gentleman who had escorted us home, ‘tell me by what chance is it that the English people receive their king after this manner !’

‘The popularity of our king,’ said he, ‘depends upon circumstances, which no human power can control. The people are ignorant, and are led by designing demagogues. Bread is dear, they hiss the king ; trade is dull, they hiss the king ; they hate peace, they hiss the king ; the queen behaves ill, they hiss the king. The following year, perhaps, bread is cheap and trade brisk, they cheer the king ; his ships or his armies gain a victory, they smother him with kindness ; his ministers make good speeches, and talk of reducing taxes, they will lay down their lives for him. Who can account,’ said he, ‘for popular

favour, or popular disfavour? It is as uncertain as the wind that blows.'

'I tell you what, sir,' said I, taking hold of the tip of my beard, and holding it out to him, 'do you see this?'

'Yes,' answered he, 'I see it.'

'Well then, by this I swear, and I can swear by nothing more sacred, that if the people of Teh-ran, upon the presence of their shah, were even to spit in his presence, or to do any thing by look or speech that indicated disrespect, he would order a *katl-i-aum*, a general massacre, to take place, and would not leave one rogue of them to look at the sun the next morning. By all the Imams, it is as true as I stand here.'

The gentleman at this speech opened his eyes with astonishment, and seeing perhaps how cheap we held other peoples' heads, he made us a low bow, and took his leave.

By this time the ambassador had returned, and when we had related to him and to the mehman-dar the adventures of the morning, they consoled us by laughing at our beards, and said that, if we expected to find in the English mob the same servility which existed in the Persian, we were much mistaken. 'They are as different,' said they, 'as the dirty puddle in which a camel drinks is to the sea, which at one hour is agitated by a hurricane, at another lulled into a dead calm.'

Mohamed Beg answered, for his part, that he would rather belong to the puddle, if what he had seen to-day and the day before, when he had been so mauled, were acts illustrative of the people of England.

The ambassador then described his adventures : Never had man seen so much in so short a space of time. A king on a throne ; dresses of all descriptions ; gold, silver, velvet ; sticks, swords, and gold maces ; men with extraordinary wigs sprinkled with dust ; a multitude of *omrahs*, with scarlet and ermine cloaks ; a rush of men, with a *kedkhoda*, covered with false hair, at their head ; and to crown all, women ! ‘ Oh such women !’ said he, ‘ I was in love with them all ; they were all unveiled ; I saw much flesh whiter than snow ; eyes that killed ; and teeth which smiled delight !’

We had never before seen our ambassador in such a state. But there was one fair creature above the rest, of whose charms he raved ; he had never conceived that any thing human could be so beautiful ; his heart was on fire. It was plain that this circumstance alone had reconciled him to a residence among the infidels ; and now we learned to appreciate the truth of that saying of our immortal Sheikh, ‘ Be you seated in the most lonely shade of the valley of the angel of death, and let love be your companion, the desert will appear a paradise, and your wretchedness will seem beatitude.’ He called her his *jalibeljeloob** ; swore that the leaf of her eye† was more tender than that of the rose ; that she was more brilliant than a moon fourteen days old‡ ; and that she was in the very eyeball§ of her age ; in short, he made one believe that she was a very phoenix, ‘ The one of ones.’

* Ravisher of hearts.

† An eastern image for mistress.

‡ The eyelid.

§ Pinnacle.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A dinner is given to the ambassador.—Of the precedence of women.—Of wine-drinking.

THERE seemed now to pervade one new and universal impulse throughout the city to congregate in a thousand different manners, for objects which to us were totally novel. The men sought the women, and the women received the men. In the morning they met at occasional visits to talk upon matters of little importance ; then they congregated in troops on horseback, or in carriages ; they then dispersed and separated into different companies to eat ; and although by the time they had done this it was our time for going to bed, yet again they met in larger and more numerous assemblies, to dance, or to sit, or to be pressed together in masses in a manner difficult to explain. In this we were told they followed their own pleasure ; nor were these great meetings at all for the honour of their king, as our principal ones generally are, but purely for their own gratification. When we meet in large bodies it is usually to attend our shah ; and although we do congregate and eat together occasionally, yet who ever thought of doing so in the unbounded manner of England ?

The mehmandar came into the ambassador's room the day after his appearance at the house

of parliament, and said, 'Here are five invitations to dinner to-day.' 'Allah, Allah!' exclaimed the ambassador, 'five invitations! who can eat five dinners in one day?'

'It is not necessary to eat them all,' answered the mehmandar; 'it is enough that you accept one. You eat one dinner, but you may go to as many evening assemblies afterwards as you please. Here is a whole handful of invitations.'

We remained perfectly astonished. 'Who can go through such labour,' said we, 'and then live? We are Persians; we go to sleep when the last prayers have been chanted, and we awake with the dawn. How is this?'

'You will soon get accustomed to our manners,' said the mehmandar. 'We make little distinction between day and night at this season.'

Without more difficulty the ambassador, accompanied by the mehmandar and myself, went to the dinner in question, which was given by one of the viziers. He dressed himself in his best, putting on the cap of ceremony with the shawl round it, and girding himself with his diamond-hilted dagger. He had found it more convenient to adopt the shoes of the Franks (excepting on very great occasions, when he preserved our own high-heeled slippers,) because it was impossible for him to be always accompanied by his shoe-bearer. He intimated that I was to accompany him, and accordingly I also made my person as fit to be seen as possible.

No one came to inform us that the entertainment was ready; no one said the *Bismillah!* but we went straight to the vizier's house; and we

were announced by very loud knocks on a closed door, inflicted by strong servants. Other servants having appeared from within, we were invited to walk in. The ambassador's name was then called out at stated intervals, until we were ushered into the hall of meeting. Here, at the threshold, we were received by the vizier, who himself was walking about as well as most of his guests, for there appeared to be perfect liberty on that score. We then went to the vizier's wife, who seemed to be quite as much at home as her husband, and did her best by sweet smiles to make us welcome. There were several other khanums, very civil and handsome. If any portion of a veil had been thrown over them, to hide certain parts of their very white persons, I should have been in a fever of love at once; but as it was, I scarcely thought of them as women. The conversation began by every person present appearing anxious to know whether we had seen the sun on that day; for it was ascertained that it had been seen, but whether for one hour, or only half an hour, there appeared to be some serious doubts. The ambassador, evidently tired at this constant allusion to our supposed worship of the sun, turned off the observation by a compliment to the vizier's wife. 'You do not want a sun in your country,' said he, 'when you have such suns as the khanum's eyes to give light and joy to the world!'

When this was interpreted, it produced a universal cry of approbation, and was immediately taken up, with the greatest good humour, by the vizier himself, who said, 'If his excellency is to be an apostate, and if he is to worship these suns, (point-

ing to the lady's eyes,) instead of his own we must look about us. We must begin building harems, and manufacturing veils.'

Upon this, a great deal of agreeable joking took place, which animated the whole party, and indeed gave us an insight into the English character we had never before acquired. We, Persians, who are so fond of a good saying, were delighted to find that so much merriment could exist among persons who usually live in a fog; and the ambassador, who thought that there might be some etiquette among them as to who should lanch the first joke, seeing that they were in general so taciturn, willingly ventured to break the spell, and never lost an opportunity for the future putting in his word whenever he could do so with propriety.

The entrance of a person with white dust on his head to invite us to the feast put an end for a time to the good humour that had broken out; and when the company stood up, we discovered that there existed among the English to the full as much etiquette about precedence as in our country. But Allah! Allah! who, let me say, were the objects of it! Mohamed Beg, when I related the fact, would not believe it. Women!—they, the women, took precedence. They walked out of the room first, while the men seemed to struggle for the privilege of leading them forwards. Every honour was intended towards our ambassador; he was invited to make his way with the vizier's wife, his right hand placed in her left; and, considering that this was the first time he had performed such a ceremony, he really

did it amazingly well. Without even thinking of washing our hands before we began to eat, both men and women proceeded to the scene of action. What we Mussulmans were to do with our left hands was always a subject of deep consideration; but in a country of infidels we took liberties that no other emergency could ever sanction.

We entered a large room, in the centre of which was spread a table more curiously ornamented than any we had yet seen. Around this we placed ourselves, but not without much of the difficulty of etiquette. I avow that, saving our own beards, which looked out of character among the smooth chins that wagged round the board, I was delighted at the sight. 'Tis true that much more noise was heard than during one of our entertainments; for the unceasing activity of the servants with creaking shoes, the clash of plates, the ringing of glasses, the slashing and cutting with sharp instruments, and, above all, the universal talking of the assembly, created a din to which we were little accustomed, and which in Persia would be esteemed as highly indecorous.* But it was an enlivening sight; and excepting the absence of a Hafiz to chant the luxuries of our wine, of the excellence of which even our blessed Prophet could have had no idea, the entertainment would have been perfect. Of what the numerous dishes were composed, I did not give myself the trouble to consider; and without pausing to

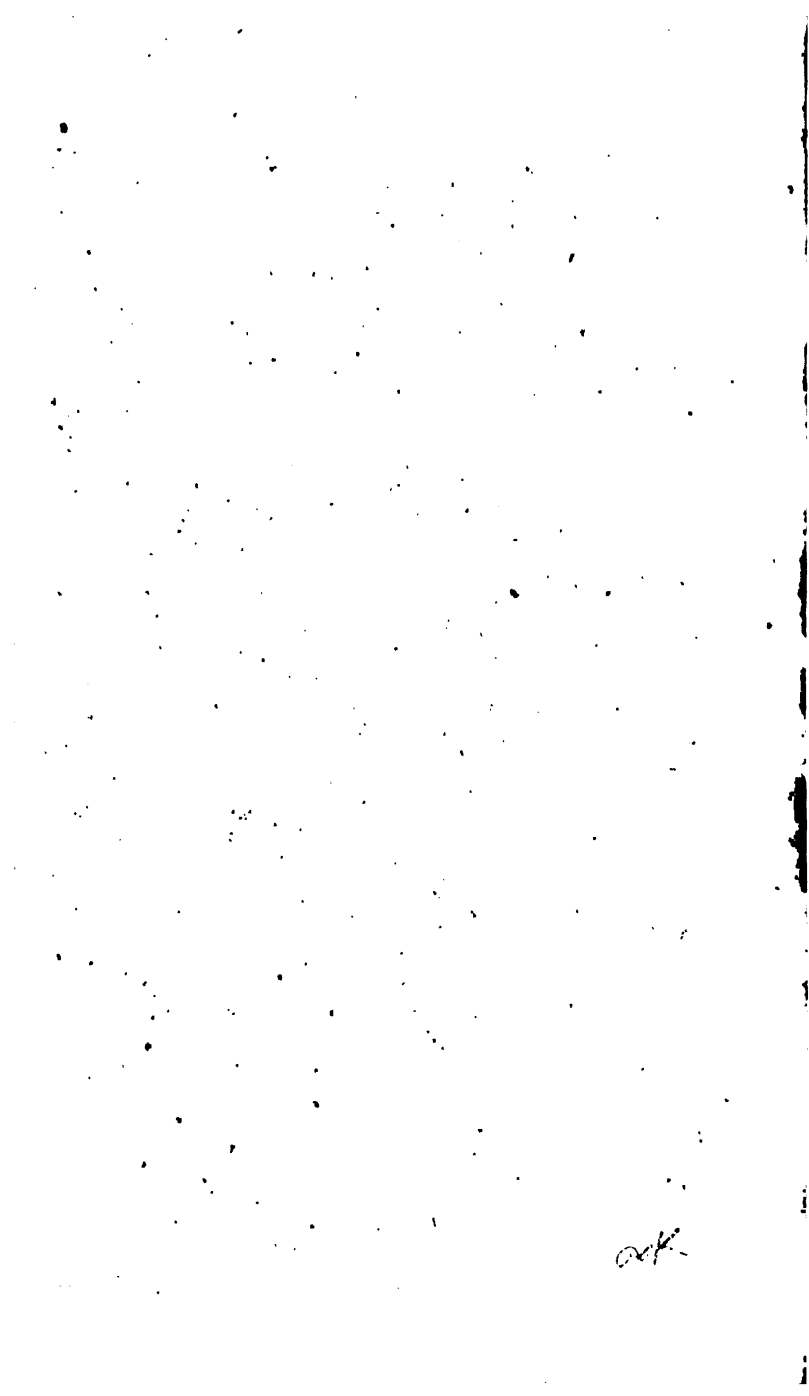
* Persian servants in attendance at an entertainment are scarcely heard. They do their work without shoes; and as there is no handing of plates, and no changing of knives and forks, the quiet is great compared to the din of our tables.

inquire whether the mutton had properly bled, or whether the poultry had died the true death, I eat whatever came in my way. I certainly made one or two scrutinizing pauses at a new sort of flesh, and which I fancied might be that of the unclean beast; but 'in the name of Allah!' said I, 'what is the use of sticking about pollution, when we have now been steeped in it ever since we have lived among the infidel?' and so I ate of every thing that was offered to me. If Mohamed Beg had been with us, he would have been blowing over his shoulders during the whole of the entertainment. The ambassador seemed to be as much at his ease as any one of the most experienced eaters of a dinner among the English themselves. He managed the spoons, knives, claws, and pincers, with surprising dexterity. I must own that I was not so fortunate, for I made one or two mistakes merely from the force of previous habit, which evidently had an unfavourable effect upon those around me. I shared my neighbour's bread, which is here looked upon as offensive as it is otherwise in Persia. I drank out of his glass; and once I presented a bit with my fingers from a dish before me, at which he made a start as if I had offered poison. Although we did not sit with our knees double, but were quite at our ease upon chairs, with legs pendant, yet the great length of the entertainment almost killed me. At length there was a general move, but to my astonishment, the women only took their departure. This was the nearest approach to our own customs which I had yet seen, and I asked my neighbour why this distinction was made? why the women

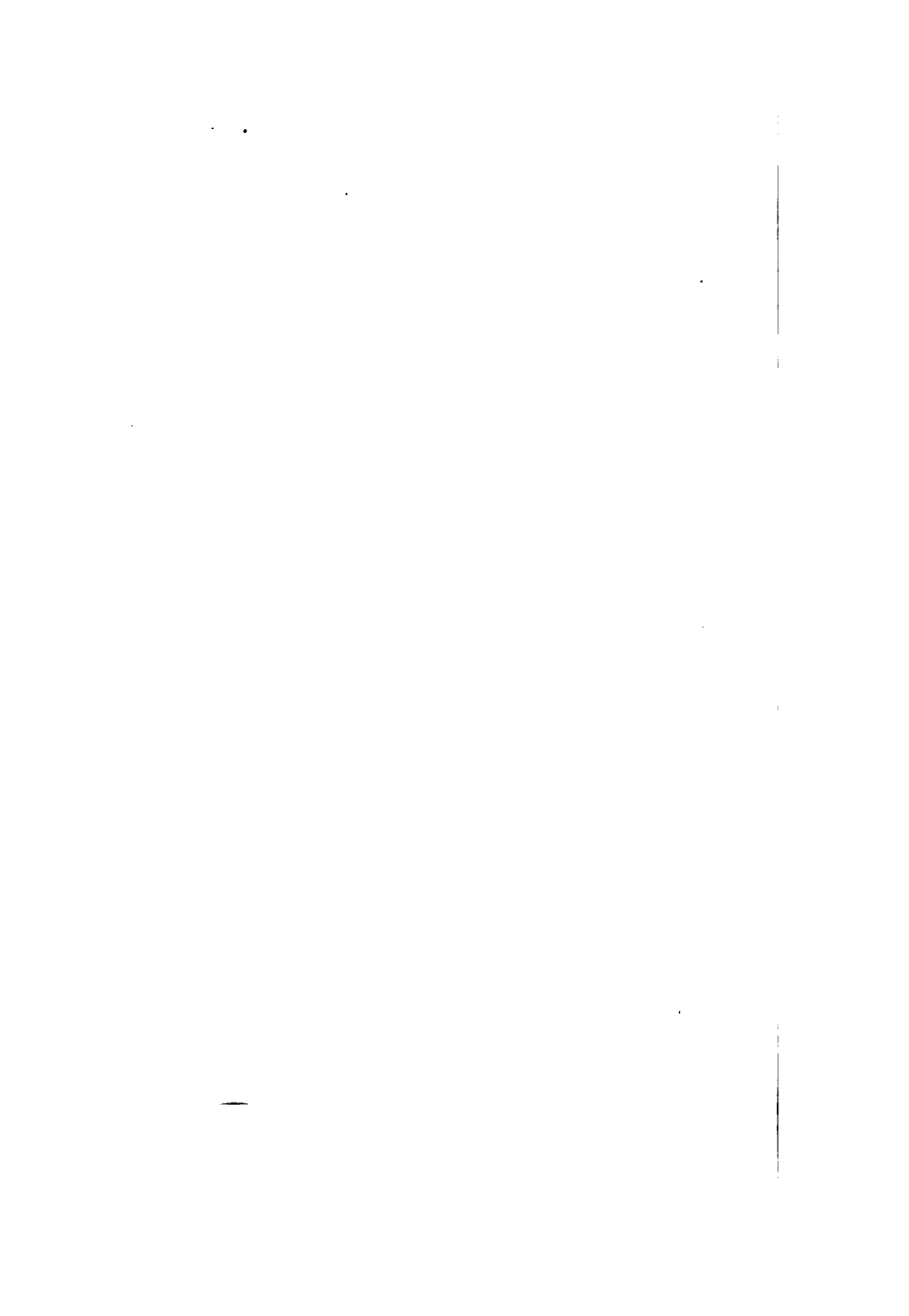
alone went?. He seemed puzzled for an explanation. 'Is it thus ordained in your scriptures,' said I, 'or is it ordered by your king?' Still he was at a loss for an answer; and I concluded that this might be a custom borrowed from Islam. 'My neighbour hinted that the absence of the women left the men at greater liberty to talk and drink wine. 'Ah, then,' said I, 'you must have adopted that maxim of the East, which saith, 'first dinner, then conversation;' but if drinking be your object, this is not the way to set about it. Do as we do in Persia; get up betimes in the morning; go into a garden; seat yourself near a running stream; put flowers on your head; have songsters and nightingales; drink till your senses are gone; wait till they return; then drink again, and take no thought of time; let day and night be the same, until at length you have so completely soaked yourself with wine, that it is time to cry out, 'Enough! enough!'

Whether my neighbour understood my attempt to explain myself in English, I know not, but he eyed me with astonishment.

At length the dinner was over, and with unwashed hands we proceeded to the room of assembly, where we found the vizier's wife and her khanums ready again to receive us.



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